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REALITIES.

NOT A NOVEL.

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REALITIES,

NOT A NOVEL.

A TALE FROM REAL LIFE.

In Four Volumes.



BY THE AUTHOR OF

CORRECTION, DECISION, REFUGEES, &c.

God only knows who is a hypocrite and who is not: at the great general review of us all, at the day of judgment (and not till then), it will be seen who have done their duties in this world, and who have not, and we shall be advanced accordingly.

STERNE.

VOL. II.



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1825.

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v. 2

REALITIES.

CHAPTER I.

Nor ever let me cease to know
The pulse that throbs at joy and wo ;
Nor let my vacant cheek be dry,
When sorrow fills a brother's eye ;
Nor may the tear that frequent flows
From private or from social woes,
E'er make this pleasing sense depart,
Ye cares, oh harden not my heart !

LANGHORNE.

DURING the early part of Mr. St. Orme's illness, there was not among the many inquirers, whom respect, kindness, politeness, or worldly policy led to his door, a more constant or a more solicitous inquirer than the reverend Henry Glossit, who

for some time had disappeared from the circle: at first he did not attempt to see Augusta; but when from Mrs. Seymour, whose eager eyes and ears had drank in sufficient to raise painful suspicions that her friend's future prospects were every way gloomy, he received a hint that she feared St. Orme's property was inadequate to the handsome support of his family, should he unfortunately be taken from them, of which there was every prospect—no sooner did Glossit receive this hint, than he dispatched a short letter, addressed equally to Augusta and her mother, sympathizing with them in their present distress, again renewing his suit with Augusta, and imploring that if rejected as a lover, he may still be considered a friend, and allowed to render them every assistance their situation might require.

“ He intends no doubt to be liberal and delicate; if therefore his conduct does not come up to your own *beau ideal*, rather view the intentions than the action,” said

Mrs.

Mrs. St. Orme, as she returned the letter to Augusta.

"Will you write him a reply, mamma?" asked she with trepidation.

"Oh no! I cannot write. You had better see him—your spirits are better than mine; and alas! Augusta, it is impossible to say what we may need—I dare not think or fancy."

"Do not indulge mistrusting fear, my dear mother—all will be very well yet," replied Augusta, cheerfully, though her heart was bursting.

It was a week after this before the fluctuating state of her father permitted Augusta to see any visitor, beyond the very few who were allowed to come into the room adjoining the sick chamber of St. Orme. She then, in compliance with his repeated request, met Mr. Glossit in the drawing-room; his conduct was even more than usually polite and respectful—and when Augusta, worn down with fatigue and care, requested even with tears

that he would desist from a pursuit that made his presence disagreeable, and served only to increase the load of sorrow that oppressed her, he interrupted her with the most vehement expressions of regret his gentle nature could use, protesting that no gratification he could personally enjoy, would compensate to him for one moment's pain he had caused her, whom to protect and shield from even the shadow of ill, would, were he allowed to do it, constitute the bliss and business of his life !

“ You are very kind, very liberal,” sighed Augusta—“ but it must not be; you have chosen your path, I mine, and they are widely different—differing in every essential point that would constitute happiness, or ensure peace. My pilgrimage may prove a thorny one, but the thorns shall not be of my own planting.”

“ I understand you,” replied Glossit, fervently—“ and would, oh how gladly would I embrace your prejudices and dogmas,

dogmas, were the thing within my power! but of this be assured, I would never interfere with your creed, your plans, pursuits, or charities; the purest worship should be paid to your purity—and in your family you should reign omnipotent."

"Oh, how little do you know me!" cried Augusta—but she was interrupted by the entrance of Edwin Heathfield.— "Ah, my dear Augusta, how much I rejoice to see you again!" exclaimed he, seizing her offered hands, and pressing them to his lips.—"But, dear Augusta, this life of fatigue and sorrow makes sad havock with you; you must indeed be more careful of yourself, or we shall have to deplore your illness likewise—and good Heavens what will be done then!"

"Then, as in every other situation, my kind friend, we must do our duty, and leave the event to him in whose hands alone are the issues of life and death; but fear nothing for me—I am where I ought to be, and therefore where it is best for

me to be," replied Augusta, with animation.

Glossit marked the kindling beam of Edwin's eye, the fervour of his expression, and the kindness of Augusta's manner, with contending emotions. He had hitherto scarcely admitted a thought of the unpretending Edwin, and never for an instant supposed such a youth would dare aspire to Augusta, or cross his path in the way to happiness. A new and unwelcome ray of light now broke in upon him; he recollects a thousand instances in which a preference had been given to Edwin, and wondered he had not before been convinced, that such constant attentions received a lover-like sanction from the smile with which they were received. Stung by sudden jealousy, and half maddened by the violence of emotions so unusual to him, Glossit hastily rose, and haughtily bidding Augusta farewell, cast a look of withering contempt on Edwin, and rushed from the house.

" What

“ What ails our speculatist now—how have I drawn on myself that direful portentous frown ? ” asked Edwin ; but before Augusta could reply, Mrs. Seymour came softly creeping in—“ I am very glad to see you down stairs, my dear,” said she—“ I met that nice young man, Mr. Glossit, at the door, but he would hardly stay to speak to me. I do assure you that it gave me very great pleasure to hear from himself how much he is attached to you ; think what a comfort it is that through every cloud you have such a prospect of happiness.”

“ It would, madam, if I could find happiness with such a being ; but that not being the case, he must still woo and wed philosophy, and I must look elsewhere for comfort.”

It was now Edwin Heathfield’s turn to disappear in haste, and no sooner was he gone, than Mrs. Seymour resumed with “ hoping her dear Miss St. Orme would think better ; for do you know,” conti-

nued she, " that I told him I did not know any one more deserving of a fine fortune than yourself; and I was sorry, my dear friend, Mr. St. Orme would not be able to leave you a great deal; but a fortune in a wife is better than a fortune with a wife."

" My dear madam," cried Augusta, " spare me, I pray, and spare yourself further trouble on my account; my blessed father will not yet be obliged to let any one know what he can leave his children; and while we have him, we possess every thing and abound; nor need we envy princes their possessions: but I will send mamma to you--she has been confined rather too long at her post of observation." So saying, Augusta withdrew to hide from every eye the burst of indignant and mortified feeling that shook her heart to its very centre; to become the object of pity and compassion to such beings as Mrs. Seymour and Glossit—oh, it was dreadful! was humiliating beyond all expression!—

sion!—“Am I reduced to this—sunk so low in the scale of worth as to need a recommendation *from her!* If so, let me hide my inglorious head for ever in the deep shades of retirement!” groaned she, as, struggling with the passionate violence of her feelings, she strove to put on the appearance of calmness and composure. But in this, as in many other instances, Augusta acted wrong by encouraging the suggestions of a proud and mortified spirit, that blinded her to that which, on after consideration, she clearly saw proceeded from the generosity of the man, who believing her poor, and to a certain extent friendless, offered her wealth and consequence, although he could not, from such a connexion, expect an increase of either in return.

The winter rolled on—St. Orme slowly recovered; his recovery, however, promised an amended state of general health; and Anna was but too happy in contemplating her invalid, while the domestic

cares and duties, now considerably augmented with the education of Robert, Miriam, and Gordon, and constant attention to the wishes and whims of her delicate parents, fully occupied the active mind and hands of Augusta, to the exclusion of visiting or company.

The Heathfields spent many of the long winter evenings in mutual interchanges of friendship and kindness with the invalid St. Orme and his family. Edwin was uniformly affectionate, mild, and attentive, but spoke not of love; and if at times a suspicion of his entertaining a sentiment beyond that of fraternal affection glaneed across the mind of St. Orme, it was quickly banished by the cheerful composure and disengaged air with which Augusta received his attentions, and the sisterly kindness she undisguisedly evinced, both in his absence and presence.

Of Mr. Glossit they saw but little; he called occasionally, but Augusta, when she did condescend to appear, was so distant, cool,

cool, and lofty—so unconcerned in all his relations, and so perfectly unembarrassed in her manner, that all hope of an interest in her heart, for the present at least, withered within him ; some future time, he told Mrs. St. Orme, would perhaps work a revolution in his favour, and to that he trusted. She advised him by no means to risk his chance of happiness on such a cast—certain that the objections of Augusta would only gain strength by time.—“It is,” continued she, “to your principles and moral character we object ; an infidel, however bland his manners, or liberal his sentiments, is an object of horror and detestation to a mind imbued with the divine principles of Christianity ; nothing less than a radical change of heart and soul, therefore, could render you more pleasing to Augusta ; and of that I see no kind of prospect. Rest assured then she will never listen to your suit.”

Glossit smiled, bowed, sighed, and departed—more than ever in love, and think-

ing religion in women no bad thing ; but voting it a perfect bore, and the most stupid thing in creation, in the superior sex.

During this long winter, Augusta had abundant opportunities of reviewing her situation, and resolving on the steps best to be taken. The long illness and attendant expences of her father, his being so long withdrawn from a business of which he was himself the very essence, added to some severe losses he met with at the same time, produced a little temporary embarrassment in his affairs, though not to such extent as to affect the regularity of his payments for a single hour, which, under the pressure of recent sickness and debilitated nerves, appeared to his rigidly honest and upright mind of much greater consequence than it otherwise would : hence he would fancy his long toiled-for schemes of independence and comfort were at once overthrown, and would talk to Augusta, in strains of despondence

spondence and heart-breaking fondness, of all that would be required of her when he was gone; for exposure to the world, and failing to pay each man his own in due course, would, he was sure, sink him to the grave. Augusta thought so too, if such an event should ever happen; but as far as she could discover, there did not exist a probability of it: and Mrs. St. Orme, in whose keen observation on this subject she placed the most implicit confidence, often assured her husband that no difficulty existed of sufficient magnitude to cause them serious uneasiness; a few weeks, with very little exertion, would bring every thing round; "but," continued she, with all her native energy now strung, "let no one see, let no one suspect, we have difficulties to encounter; every thing depends on appearance—once let the finger of scorn be pointed, and we sink immediately."

Acting on this principle, not a clerk in the office, nor the most intimate friend or correspondent,

correspondent, had the slightest suspicion that St. Orme was not a man of wealth, enjoying every luxury in perfect ease. But the consciousness that such was not the truth, often steeped the pillow of Augusta with tears; it was not for wealth or grandeur she wept, for both might have been hers at pleasure—she wept her father's uneasiness, her mother's exertions, and the children's blighted prospects, if deprived of that kind, industrious, and upright father; then would arise the question—“Under those circumstances, have I the right to—am I justified in rejecting the means of independence, the power of doing good, and raising for these dear children a friend capable of protecting them? May it not be the design of Providence that I should be the means of converting him to true religion—that I should supply to the poor parishioners the duties of their pastor, and by shewing him the superior beauties of Christianity, wean him from infidelity, and lure him into

into the paths of piety? This would indeed be worth living for; and shall I not do it?—shall I shrink from a little difficulty at the outset? Surely I ought not—I dare not."

But a very few moments generally restored her to cooler, sounder reasoning.—"Ah," she would then exclaim, "conceited, almost impious girl, who shall ensure you strength to contend with infidelity?—who shall assure your walking firmly in the paths of piety, when linked with an unbeliever?—when you have sworn to obey him who breaks all God's laws, and has already perjured himself by his ordination oaths?—shall I hope to find a friend in him who is not the friend of God? not the friend of him to whom I owe my being, and my well-being? Pardon, Merciful Father, the sinful thought, and give me poverty or riches, but give me industry and Christian fortitude, to support my allotted fate, and I will never dare to murmur!"

Alas,

Alas, poor Augusta ! often as this aspiration was breathed at that period of her existence, little did she foresee how often and how fully she should be called to the full practice of her profession, in after and more varied life ! In the family, and before her friends, Augusta was full of life, animation, and joy, enjoying the few sunbeams that shone across her cloudy path, regardless of the clouds, and revelling in the buoyancy of youth and spirits ; and, to a certain degree, such was really the case ; Augusta's mind was too truly elastic to sink long under oppression—it rose supported by a firm reliance on the superintending care of Providence, and secure in its own active resources, was a stranger to fear or despondency. She cheered her father with a beamy smile, foretold him long years of happiness and prosperity, promised all he required, and performed her arduous duties with unabated cheerfulness ; soothed her mother's irritated nerves, nursed her into tranquillity, fondled and

and instructed the children, and excused or hid from his father the mischievous pranks of her rough boisterous brother Edward, who, by his monkey tricks, and untameable spirits, created a perpetual whirlwind around him. He was usually kept at school, but the holidays were long, and Mrs. St. Orme's overweening fondness for her young Bruin, made them more frequent than the school regulations required, to the great annoyance of her whole household, not one of whom dared openly complain of the young tyrant's frequent mischiefs, however much they suffered from them; but to Augusta their complaints were frequently made with the addition of—"I'm sure, Miss, if 'twere not for you, I wou'dn't bear wi' hun, that's what I wou'dn't, for I cou'dn't no more nor nothing."

These and similar employments left but little time for languor or regret on the hands of Augusta, nor allowed of any stagnation of feeling or energy.

At

At the very few places of public amusement, or fashionable parties, Augusta this winter attended; she constantly met Mr. Glossit; but as it always happened she was closely attended by Edwin Heathfield, little conversation took place between them, beyond the common forms of polite society: the reverend gentleman, aided by his fine person, fine fortune, and bland manners, was become a general favourite, particularly among the ladies, many of whom angled skilfully and carefully for the good things of this life, with which it was in his power to endow them. His heart he was at liberty to bestow as he pleased, but somehow or other the fair anglers let the hook or line be seen by their gilded fish, who, like all weak minds, dreaded being *caught*, and avoided the many pretty baits with provoking quicksightedness; though it was very generally known that he would most willingly have laid his person, his acres, and all his delightful *bijouterie*, at the feet of

Augusta

Augusta St. Orme, who, nobody could conceive why, had had the monstrous effrontery to refuse him.

Augusta, with a cousin who was visiting her, one evening accompanied lady Cardonnel and her family to a ball, given in honour of a splendid naval victory ; as such things generally are, it was crowded to excess—all the fashion of the surrounding neighbourhood being collected to give eclat to the heroes of their country.

“ Do you know,” asked lady Cardonnel, of Eleonora St. Orme, “ that yonder fine young man, so surrounded by belles, is a disconsolate rejected swain of your cousin’s—of my fair friend Augusta here, who, to judge by her looks, would not willingly break the heart of any one ? ”

“ I did not indeed know of it,” replied Eleonora, laughing. “ But, my dear madam, if that is the countenance and complexion of a desponding, heart-broken man, I will advise all my brothers and friends to despond and break their hearts before they

go

go a wooing, in order to improve their beauty."

"Ay, ay," cried Miss Bell Cardonnel, "rattle while you can; but take care of your heart, for the man by this unfortunate dip into the waters of love—more effectual far than the waters of Styx—is become invulnerable—even his very heels have been dipped, and arrows innumerable, all drawn from Cupid's quiver, are daily aimed at him, yet there he stands unscathed and arrow-proof."

"Say, rather, he got a dip in the waters of Lethe, and steeped in forgetfulness, remembers no longer that he ever did, or ever ought, even profess, that an arrow, from the winged urchin's quiver had pierced the thick mail of self-approval with which he is encased," said Augusta.

"Nay, now, do not abuse the poor man; if you will not have him, why he is fair play for others—so let him take care how I level my bow," returned Eleonora,

as

as they separated to join the dance then forming.

Augusta had reached the bottom, and was sitting while her partner sought for some refreshment, when a voice behind caught her ear, exclaiming—"Who the devil is that fine dark girl, dancing with Fred Cardonnel? Quite a new face, I'll swear, but no bumpkin — not her first appearance in a ball-room, or good company. Egad, she knows how to move!"

"*The Bell*," replied his companion, "introduced her just now as a Miss something St. Orme, to Jack Byfield; what St. Orme I cannot fancy; for the merchant's progeny consists of brats only, with the exception of that noble girl Augusta. Egad! I honour that girl, because she knows how to despise that puppy Glossit and his fortune; though perhaps she has not a single shilling herself."

"I do not know her," returned the first speaker; "but St. Orme himself is so truly a gentleman, that I should expect his

his daughter knew how to value herself. But this dark girl, I must see more of her; you must introduce me."

"That's a good one, faith! and never saw her before! No, no, my good fellow, no liberties with a St. Orme; if one she is—that will never do. There is pride enough there to blow us to the devil, and godliness enough to make one tremble!"

Augusta being called on to resume her place in the dance, rose, and turned her face full on the speaker as he concluded the last sentence; then giving her hand to her partner, walked away, before his fashionable *nonchalance* had helped him to an apology or address.

"I hate these crowded heated rooms, and cannot bear to see you in them, Augusta," said Edwin Heathfield, as he joined the Cardonnel party in the course of the evening.

"I am sorry for you, Edwin—it is an unpleasant feeling; but why do you dislike to see me in them?"

"Oh,

"Oh, Augusta, I hate to see you look so delighted in the midst of folly, and smile in all the fulness of content on puppies who talk of you as if you were an article for sale, until I long to knock them all down. All girls should have fathers or brothers to bring them into society."

"And wherever they have not, Providence deals unkindly by them, hey, Edwin?"

"No, not that exactly; but it chafes me to hear those popinjays."

"So it seems," replied Augusta, smiling; "but it is a pity you should allow it to do so; half the amusement of these places consists in the variety of character, and lack of character, you meet with; and every empty pate finds itself at liberty to level an eye-glass and quiz its neighbour. Take things as they are, Edwin—enjoy the good, and reject the ill, without the trouble of quarrelling with it. See now how gaily Eleonora trips this way, talking and laughing with Glossit, careless of his

good

good or ill propensities, totally unacquainted with either, and regardless of every creature here: these are the proper feelings for a ball-room. Eleonora was created for such a hemisphere."

"For what hemisphere was Eleonora created?" cried the gay girl, as she joined them; "for a very delightful one, I hope, Mr. Edwin; but I suspect the one I should breathe best in would choke you with its perfumes, its essences, and its breathing sweets."

"I am delighted to see you look so well, Miss St. Orme," sighed the bowing Mr. Glossit; "your charming cousin has kindly been dispelling the ennui which renders this and every other place a desert to me—"

"Unblest by your society, which alone would make the wilds of Africa a Paradise," added Eleonora, with ludicrous solemnity. "Say this, Mr. Glossit, or you have said nothing, positively nothing, and Augusta will only smile contempt on you.

What,

What, amuse one lady with the praise of another!—ridiculous! I thought better of you, Mr. Glossit."

It was impossible to resist a smile at the triumphant glance of Eleonora's dark eye as Glossit writhed beneath her badinage, though Augusta was provoked at her levity, and secretly determined never to place her feelings in the power of one who could thus unmercifully lacerate them. But it was in vain Augusta frowned; her cousin rattled away, unmindful of any thing but wit and repartee, in which she shone, and was proud to display it. The circle increased around them, and Eleonora's shafts flew in every direction, tipt with brilliance, keenness, fire, and life: she declared herself too idle to dance, but determined to find amusement, and bestow it.—“Now,” cried she, after rattling on a long while, “I have made you all stare sufficient for one night, and begin to grow weary of talking. At this immense distance from London, not one

of you know how to talk ; but I shall take Augusta with me to town, and give her a finish, and return her to you a copy of myself. If I remain here one moment longer I shall inevitably fall asleep ; so arise—let us be going."

Among the murmurs that were heard around, there were many that to a less volatile character would have been mortifying. Augusta, without well knowing why, felt her proud spirit chafed, and her high sense of female delicacy and dignity deeply wounded ; and she was therefore relieved by hearing lady Cardonnel's carriage announced, glad to escape, and bury in her own bosom the remembrance of what she felt to be a departure from the strict line of female decorum, for which fashion was a poor apology.

CHAPTER II.
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What is this world? Thy school, oh, Misery!  
Our only lesson is to learn to suffer;  
And he who knows not that, was born for nothing.

YOUNG.

WITH returning spring St. Orme felt renewed health and strength, his little embarrassments were quite overcome, despondence and gloom disappeared, and the sun of prosperity and peace again gilded his elegant home, and shone on his blooming family. Eleonora was soon to return to town, and was quite importunate with Augusta to go with her, protesting that it was nothing short of sinful to keep such a fine girl mewed up nursing, sewing, and making pastry, when she ought to be seen in the world, where she needed only to be seen to be admired.

It was natural that Augusta should wish to see London, and know something more of its wonders than she could learn from report; her uncle's house she knew to be the seat of fashion, life, and gaiety, as little like the home of her childhood as any thing could possibly be, and she contemplated a short residence there with all the joyous enthusiasm of her nature; but there were drawbacks to this prospect of felicity, that at times took from her the very wish of leaving home, and greatly lessened her desire for seeing the world.

Augusta loved mirth and cheerfulness, and heartily despised the *mauvaise honte* so often dignified with the name of modesty; but her cousin Eleonora presented a character hitherto unknown to her, and to which she found it very difficult to reconcile herself—a volatile, thoughtless, laughing Hebe, whose dark eyes, sparkling with uncontrolled mirth, proclaimed her quite unacquainted with sorrow, and totally unconcerned for the griefs of others; they

they were eyes that the tear of sensibility never softened, and wanting that, there were those who thought they were wanting in their highest charm ; she was a wit, but did not use her wit as seldom as her sword ; on the contrary, it was flung off with careless levity, without the least regard for wounded feeling, delicacy, or sentiment : to shine was the aim of Eleonora, and at whose expence she cared not ; the tears of the timid, or the burning blushes of the proud, but added to her amusement.

Such a character may create passing admiration, but never awakens the throb of friendship, or illumines the pure torch of love. To Augusta there seemed no tangible points about her cousin ; she was a creature of wit, laughter, and frivolity, but without sentiment, feeling, or affection : Augusta could neither love or esteem her ; she was, in the exuberance of her own unbroken spirits, often induced to join in the mirth of Eleonora, but was

never amused or instructed by her, though very often fatigued and more deeply offended than she chose should be visible; thus feeling, a more extended *séjour* with her cousin offered no inviting prospect: but there were other sisters, and they were represented as differing widely—if so, well, and if not, Augusta was wholly free from the girlish sentimentality that cannot exist without a confidant; she was candid almost to a fault; but candour requires no dear confidant, and her feelings were her own.

There was another consideration that militated much against Augusta's London excursion; it would, it must necessarily, be attended with some serious expence—serious however to persons accustomed to consider the value of money, and to cut off the excrescences and “'tis but's” of expenditure. She recollects the heavy pulls the last year had made on her father's purse, and the consequent difficulties of the winter just past, and dreaded adding

adding one iota to either, or leaving her mother to the possibility of being overtaken by sickness or misfortune in her absence.

Augusta would sometimes ponder over all this, until it almost appeared her duty to remain at the post she had so long and so industriously filled; had she been convinced such was her duty, no argument nor inducement whatever would have possessed sufficient power to have made her accept the oft-repeated invitation of her uncle and his family.

Mrs. St. Orme knew not how she should spare Augusta—it would be taking her right hand from her; but, poor girl, she had undergone a great deal of confinement and fatigue, and deserved some indulgence. She was of an age too when some extended knowledge of the world would be advantageous; she should therefore wish her to return with Eleonora, and spend the spring season in her uncle's family.

St. Orme said little; he thought every body should prefer home to any other place in the world, and could not perceive how Augusta was to be improved by an acquaintance with splendid living and gay, fashionable society: he thought her very preferable to Eleonora at present: yet Eleonora was the creature his brother had formed. Still however it would appear unkind to refuse her; he loved to be thought a tender father, as he really was a good one; beside, he was proud of his girl, and a secret feeling, scarcely perhaps acknowledged to himself, that the elder St. Orme, who had lorded it mightily over his brothers, and whose taste had been refined by travel and a long residence in other climes, would never have cause to blush for the *étourderies* or inelegance of his country niece; but must, on the contrary, give her the meed of approbation; this, it is probable, did more than every thing else in influencing him to give his vote for her visit to London.

The

The subject had just been talked over after dinner, and Augusta was declaring her perfect willingness to remain at home, if her going was any way inconvenient or unpleasant to her parents, when the door opened, and Mrs. Boyer was announced; the joy of her friends at this unexpected and welcome return to them, spoke more expressively than words could do the value in which she was held among them—“I longed,” said she, “yet almost dreaded to see you all, so much care and fatigue have been your portion since we parted, in which I could only participate by tears and prayers; there remains however but few traces of past griefs in any of the dear circle; you, my sweet Augusta, look a little too delicate—rather more interesting than your best friends would wish you.”

“She has,” cried her father, fondly patting her face, “looked thin for some time; we have drawn a little too freely on her stock of strength and spirits lately; the last year has been a fagging time to

us all, in one way or another; but we must give her some change now; my brother wishes her to return with Eleonora, and we think of her doing so."

"Are you very desirous of seeing a spring in London, Augusta?" asked Mrs. Boyer.

"By no means; though it certainly possesses attractions; and so does home—perhaps stronger ones; and, somehow or other, I am always best here. But come, now for your opinion, for we have talked it over a hundred times, and still remain undecided—tell me, shall I go or stay?"

"Mrs. Boyer's will be a casting vote," cried Mrs. St. Orme; "for Augusta never yet opposed an opinion of hers."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake then, let her not speak!" exclaimed Eleonora; "for that cap and countenance will inevitably condemn the delightful gaiety of Orme-ville House or Hanover-square; and I should hate more completely, if possible, than at present, all methodistical quizism."

"I would

“ I would not condemn the many for one,” calmly returned Mrs. Boyer, her pale face retaining its usual tranquil character; “ it is possible that even in your circle and family good sense and modesty may be found; and where these are to be found, I am confident my friend Augusta will not slight them, or associate with their opposites so closely as to fear contamination.”

“ Humph!” muttered Eleonora; “ so much for a harmonious voice, good eyes, and methodism.”

St. Orme looked offended, as his wife, in an exculpatory tone, said—“ It is a dangerous thing to be a wit; our little niece has been encouraged to be smart and brilliant, until she sometimes runs a risk of being mistaken, or giving offence, either of which would, I am sure, cause her considerable pain.”

“ That is, if I caused you pain, aunty, who really, for a righteous woman, are

very good and kind, though I do hate quizzes," cried the incorrigible girl.

"How easy it is to mistake flippancy for wit, and folly for good-nature!" said Augusta proudly, as rising she offered her assistance to lead Mrs. St. Orme to the drawing-room; but Eleonora ran before her, saying, with mimic grimace—"No, thank you, Miss Graveairs, 'severe in youthful beauty,' gang your ain way with your friend, but leave me my old aunty; I can be as good as you when I choose, that is, *appear* as pretty behaved, for as *good* I always am."

"It is a pity, my dear, that you cover really estimable qualities with the flimsy covering of a harlequin; it is at best but a gaudy, worthless garb," said Mrs. St. Orme kindly.

"I will tell you what it is, my good aunt," returned she gaily; "this being my first visit to the land of methodism, I came unprepared with a proper garb; for the delightful world in which I live prefer,

fer, by a thousand degrees, the gimping of Folly's cap and bells, the party-coloured suit of Harlequin, or the gay movements of a Columbine, to the wise look, sober colours, and steady step of your community, and Augusta's most excellent friend yonder; but before I visit you again, I will study a character better suited to this atmosphere, and not frighten you out of the little wits your praying and devotion have left you; though I suspect you will not find me half so amusing when sobered down as at present."

"I should be happy, my dear Eleonora, to find that you had yourself began to *pray*, under the influence of real religion; that alone would lop off the superabundance of your wit, and the excrescences of folly, and leave you what I think Providence designed you to be—a good and useful Christian character."

"Thank you, aunty; I dare say you would like it; but papa would go mad if he thought any of his lovely daughters were

were to be transformed into such dowdies ; I assure you I pray often enough for any reasonable being, beside bouncing down on my knees twice a-day in your damp parlour, at the risk of white swellings, and I know not what else ; good Heavens ! how papa would stare to see us all ! ”

So saying, she flew off to rattle away a bravura on a handsome piano St. Orme had hired for his accomplished niece, music not being among Augusta’s acquirements, though she possessed a thousand times more taste and ear than her fashionably-educated cousin, and had often and often implored to be allowed to cultivate it ; but Augusta’s whole education had not cost the price of an instrument ; nor would her father ever persuade himself she possessed any taste, because an old guitar still occupied a place in the lumber room, after several ineffectual attempts to extract harmony from its shattered remains, without instruction, or any acquaintance with the science of music ; yet

yet Augusta sung with a style of voice infinitely superior to Eleonora, and St. Orme frequently boasted the advantage of nature over art, declaring he would not give sixpence to have his daughter make the same "*instrumental noise*" his niece had sacrificed so much time and expence to accomplish.

Eleonora pouted her pretty lip, called him "*bête*," told him he had no music in his soul, and played much louder and worse than before.

Mrs. Boyer, though withdrawn from the world herself, was aware that it contained many charms, as well as many snares for the youthful mind; she also knew that an indulgence denied or forbidden only becomes more an object of desire, unless the judgment be convinced of its impropriety: hence, after some considerable conversation with Augusta, in which it was easy to discover that her secret inclinations strongly pleaded for all the enjoyments of her uncle's house, and thinking that a further

ther acquaintance with fashionable manners would but tend to wean her from the world, that the emptiness of pleasures derivable from the frivolous pursuits of such as waste life and health in a fruitless search for happiness in places and societies, whose noise and tumult would scare her from such a rest, would soon be discoverable and disgusting to the well-principled mind of her favourite; from these considerations Mrs. Boyer gave a decided voice in favour of the visit; and as her mother had foretold, Augusta's hesitation immediately vanished.

“ You think I may be trusted, my dear Mrs. Boyer, within the vortex of fashion,” cried she; “ if so, I shall delight to enjoy all that comes within my power; hitherto it has not been much; but I shall see better, brighter days—days of pleasure, and nights of joy; I shall not always be pent up in this narrow sphere—oh no! I feel certain that my wings will expand, my path enlarge, and that to bestow and receive

ceive happiness will form the delightful business of my life."

"Such, my dear Augusta, has hitherto, with but few interruptions, been the business of your life," replied Mrs. Boyer; "a brighter sun may perchance illumine your path, but the probability is, that those bright eyes will often be dimmed with tears, and their fires quenched by clouds of sorrow, either in your own person, or in the persons of those you love."

"Yes," said Mrs. St. Orme, "Augusta looks beyond her father's house for pleasure; we have done all that lay in our power for her indulgence; she will now see what strangers will do, and perhaps be better satisfied with their efforts than with ours: parents seldom receive *gratitude* from their children—theirs is *duty* alone."

The entrance of Mrs. Seymour and Oldham Waite put an end to Mrs. St. Orme's severe harangue. Augusta's heaving bosom and crimsoned cheek were smothered down, but her mortified feelings

ings and wounded spirit deprived her of her usual urbane courteous manners; and ashamed of the agitation which shook her, and dreading exposure, she hastily quitted the drawing-room, and sought the sanctuary of her own little closet.—“Why,” cried she, “am I thus sensitive? why regard such cutting strokes? let the guilty and self-accused shrink and quail, I surely may stand firm. *Indulgence! gratitude! duty!* good Heavens, how can I evince more gratitude than I have! and for what? but the question is dangerous. Be still, my proud, my foolish heart! all will yet be well!”

Augusta drank a long draught of water, brushed back her flowing locks, and dreading that some remark from Mrs. Seymour might renew her mother’s philippic, composed her countenance, and returned to the drawing-room.

“There,” cried Eleonora, as she entered, “have I been striving with all my powers to persuade Mr. Waite to follow us to London;

London ; but as well attempt to move the Alps, or warm the Glaciers—he is as firm as the one, and as cold as the other."

"Is he?" replied Augusta ; "he had not used to be so. I have thought Oldham's a soul of fire, and a heart as soft as melting maiden's; but perhaps you would persuade him to what his better judgment opposed, and then indeed——"

"Then indeed," interrupted Eleonora, "I allow no one's judgment better than my own; and if he does not follow us to town, he is his own enemy, and an ungracious varlet!"

"Such then must be my character, dear ladies," said Oldham, with mock humility, "dreadful as is its punishment; for within the lightning of your eye, Miss Eleonora, I dare not again venture; the fire of your wit too would scorch me to a cinder; you see it has already dried up my heart, and rendered me callous: and as to my old friend Augusta, one mile, or one thousand miles, would not increase distance

distance between us: we know each other; we are—we ever were, and we ever shall be, friends."

"I cry your mercy!" exclaimed Eleonora; "Platonics run to seed. Why, the dullest inhabitant of the dullest region around the Pole could not more coldly proclaim his friendship with youth and beauty; a soul of fire and a heart of melting softness is indeed a lump of ice, and an ossification alone can inhabit such a torpid being: Prometheus himself, I fear, would fail in warming such a statue."

"Let me whisper a secret in your ear," said Augusta—"before I return he will have introduced Mrs. Waite into our circle; acknowledge now that it is wisdom to keep beyond the pale of mischief."

"Hoot! hoot! worse and worse!" cried the rattling girl; but she was interrupted by the entrance of St. Orme bringing with him a tall, plain-looking, and somewhat awkward girl, followed by Edwin Heathfield.

Augusta

Augusta started from her chair, and casting an intelligent look on Oldham, hastened forward to receive her with marked kindness.

There was nothing in the modest deportment and homely appearance of Martha Byron to elicit respect from Eleonora, or claim the particular notice of any one. Shrugging her shoulders, and raising her arched eyebrows, with mingled wonder and contempt—"A goodly company, truly," muttered she, and turned to Edwin, to announce the speedy departure of her cousin and self for the region of life and liberty.

Edwin was amazed; he had hoped and believed that St. Orme's prejudice against his brother's manner of living would prove a negative to the plan; but to hear that he approved of her going, and that Mrs Boyer also advised it, was totally unexpected and astounding.

Eleonora gloried in the power she possessed of wounding him severely; she had not

not been so long a keen observer without discovering that all Edwin's hope of happiness rested on Augusta, and that pride, the deepest shade in Edwin's character, alone prevented him from declaring it.

Edwin Heathfield was by birth and connexions rather superior to Augusta; his education too had received careful attention; but the elder Heathfield was an easy good-natured man, content to let things take their course, not troubled with a single care for the future, and always living rather beyond his income; thus his large family, accustomed to every luxury and indulgence, were wholly without provision, and the paternal property very much injured. Mrs. Heathfield was a woman of very superior mind, who saw and lamented the situation of her children, but without the power of improving it. She had several times attempted to awaken some consideration in the bosom of her husband, but finding that he constantly took refuge from what he called her lectures, in his

own dressing-room, over an extra glass, she gave up the case as hopeless, burying in her own bosom those cares the father of her children refused to share.

Anna Heathfield had long been engaged to a gentleman of high respectability, who lived at some distance; from various motives the marriage had hitherto been postponed, but was soon expected to take place. Anna was the faithful depository of her brother's painful secret, and had often sounded Augusta on the subject, without being able to draw any favourable inference from her manner or replies; still she considered Augusta's heart and hand unengaged, and urged Edwin to try his chance for it. But Edwin was too honourable; he had neither fortune to support Augusta in the rank to which she had been accustomed, nor a profession to aid his fortune. He knew St. Orme could not be rich; and being too proud to ask assistance, to own his poverty, or to seek a profession, he smothered the warm affection

tion which glowed in his bosom, and consumed his strength and days in silent misery.

To sit under the torture of Eleonora's pointed irony, or writhe under her severe lashing, without groaning aloud, was impossible: Edwin therefore cut short his tormentor's sport, and his own visit, and hastened to his sister Anna, and from her to his own chamber, where, hid from every eye, he wept and prayed the night away.

No sooner had Edwin Heathfield retired, than Eleonora sought to renew her attack on Oldham Waite, whose eminent beauty and high-bearing had not been contemplated with indifference by the fashion-spoiled beauty. To her utter astonishment, she saw his fine eyes beaming fire, and every faculty of his soul engaged in, and listening to, and waiting on, the unpretending, homely, tall Martha Byron. Did she see clear? was it possible that such a girl as Miss Byron possessed the Promethean fire to animate and warm that

that breathing statue, so perfect in manly beauty—so deficient in warmth or feeling? a girl, all but ugly, awkward, ill-dressed, and without a spark of fashion or frolic!

As Eleonora thought, she spoke—her words almost electrified the modest Martha; but quickly recovering herself, she cast on Eleonora a look so full of pity, and yet so speaking of conscious superiority, that even her cheeks for a moment owned the blush of shame, as Oldham, turning his fine eyes expressively on her, replied to her loud thoughts—“ Yes, madam, so it really is: monster as he must acknowledge himself, modesty, intellect, and goodness, can illumine that spark in Oldham, which wit, satire, and severity, though aided by beauty, would effectually exterminate: he knows how to adore the former qualities, but for the latter—pardon him, Miss Eleonora—but he shrinks from them as from sparkling serpents.”

“ As little acquainted with, and as unfit to appreciate, the one as the other,” re-

turned Eleonora, as with a glance of inef-fable hauteur she arose and quitted the room.

During the few days that intervened before the period fixed for her departure, Augusta was doomed to feel all the fitfulness, the waywardness, and the selfishness to which the kindest hearts, if not kept under control, will become subject.

Mrs. St. Orme could not conceive how she could ask or expect any addition to her wardrobe (though that wardrobe had always been the triumph of economy); what was colonel St. Orme's style of living to them? was she to be ruined by his pride? and after all, the dress good enough for her house was good enough for any other; she had no idea of such difference between brothers.

Mr. St. Orme had hoped that Augusta was old enough to see the impropriety of accepting such thoughtless invitations: what good could she hope from going there? home was the best place for every body.

body. However, he was doomed to meet disappointment every where; but it would not last long.

“I thought, my dear papa, you wished me to go; but if I am mistaken, I will even now most willingly remain at home, and write to my uncle, saying so,” cried Augusta, with tears in her eyes.

“Oh no!” interrupted her father, “I shall never hear the last of that. No, go, and enjoy yourself; no matter, you will have had your frolic, and that is sufficient for you.”

“Surely, surely, papa, I do not deserve this severity; pray allow me to remain at home—I will frame some excuse to Eleonora, that will not reflect on you at all,” replied Augusta, earnestly.

A sharp reply sat on the lip of her father, but was interrupted by the entrance of Edwin Heathfield; he started on observing Augusta’s agitation, and the frowning brow of her father—and turned pale in proportion as Augusta crimsoned.

Augusta knew the purport of his visit, and would have prepared her father for it, had he given her an opportunity ; as it was, she shook hands with Edwin, and forcing a smile, hastily disappeared, leaving him to his fate.

The danger of losing Augusta, of her meeting such devotion in London as should induce her to settle there, had drawn from Edwin his long-cherished secret ; in the warmest and most affecting terms, he had laid his case before Augusta, imploring her pity and acceptance —at the same time acknowledging how inadequate were his means of provision, and urging her to wait until he became master of a profession.

Augusta candidly acknowledged she had no attachment stronger than that she bore to him—which she thought was more like brotherly love than any thing warmer—and something warmer she ought to feel for a husband. She had no desire to marry ; he might apply to her father, and

and she would wait years—perhaps in that time viewing him in a nearer relation, she might feel a warmer affection for him ; he was very good, and there was nobody in the world she liked better.

St. Orme knew somewhat better than his daughter, and told the young man that were he so circumstanced as to place Augusta in a station of comfort and respectability, no objection could be found to him ; but until then, he must oppose any sort of engagement. Both Augusta and himself should be left at perfect liberty to change their present views, or at some future day to ratify them.

Edwin was dissatisfied, but nothing farther could be gained—and with this conditional promise he tried to impress on the mind and heart of Augusta a virtual engagement.

“ No, no, my good friend,” replied she—“ we are both free ; I love you as a brother—perhaps it is all I ever shall do : but if I meet with some one else that I feel

gain a different interest, a warmer influence over my affections—why then, Edwin, I will never impose on you the task of bearing with my faults. You shall have all my heart, or none."

Amidst contradiction, kindness, retort, reproach, and caresses, time passed on; and the day that was to separate Augusta for the first time from the home of her joys and sorrows—the home she had laboured to adorn—the home in which she had gloried, arrived. Never before had she been separated from her parents, her brothers, her sister, and the good, kind little Robert; with all and over all she wept tears of agony, and a thousand times resolved that nothing should force her from them : her bedroom, her closet, every corner of the house and garden, gained fresh beauties. A hundred charges were given respecting her flowers—"But I shall be home soon enough to see them blossom," sobbed she.—"Edwin, I shall know, by the care you take of my plants, how to believe

believe you ;" a smile and a blush finished the sentence—and after pressing her father, her mother, the children, and the servants even, over and over again, to her burning lips and throbbing bosom, she sprung into the chaise, followed by the laughing Eleonora, a servant mounted the dickey, the door was closed, and before Augusta's blinded eyes could discover objects, a turn in the street had shut her home from her view, and the London road lay directly before her.

## CHAPTER III.

A place pick'd out by choice of best alive,  
That nature's work by art can imitate;  
In which whatever in this worldly state  
Is sweet and pleasing unto lively sense,  
Or that may daintiest fancy aggrate,  
Is poured forth with plentiful dispence,  
And made there to abound with lavish affluence.

SPENCER.

LONDON, in all the majesty of smoke, bustle, confusion, and noise, broke on the astonished senses of Augusta St. Orme, in the middle of March, and about that time of the day when the thickly-peopled streets present the appearance of a living mass, eagerly moving on, propelled by some mighty influence; while carriages of every description, threading their way along, or turning the sharp corners of narrow

narrow streets, confound the senses, or shake the nerves of the uninitiated.

A fall of snow, that during the night had blanched the surrounding country, served but the more strongly to contrast the dark heavy buildings, the thick columns of vapour, and the murky atmosphere of the metropolis.

“Now Augusta,” cried Eleonora in transport, “use your eyes, child, for here you have something worth looking at; thank fortune, we are at last in a civilized land—now I begin to breathe freely: tell me, do you not already feel a different being?”

Augusta laughed as she replied—“Fortunately I have tolerably steady nerves, and sound lungs, or I should greet your family with an hysterick fit, or asthmatic cough. Breathe freely, indeed! in air that may be cut! my only wonder is, how people bustle through it; this I fancy is a large square, if it were but possible to penetrate the dense cloud you call air.”

“ Hail prejudice, all hail ! even she who piques herself so highly on her candour— even Augusta is thy slave !” exclaimed Eleonora, as the carriage drew up at one of the largest houses in Hanover-square.

Colonel St. Orme received his daughter and niece with equal kindness ; there was a benevolence in his open, manly countenance, a fatherly affection in his smile, and an invitation in the full rich tones of his voice, that forcibly reminded Augusta of her father ; and the ready tear started to her eye, as pressing her uncle’s hand to her lips, she softly murmured—“ Not only my dear father’s brother, but his second self.”

“ While with me, my love, you will neither want father nor friend,” replied the colonel with dignity. The words were kind, but with them Augusta lost her father ; the resemblance existed no longer —she dropped the hand she held—the tears returned to their source, and with perfect composure she arose and walked

towards

towards a table covered with refreshments ; she could not swallow, it is true, nor talk much—but she could conceal her feelings, and trifle with the various dainties set before her ; and in so doing she gradually recovered her usual self-possession, without sinking in her uncle's estimation, by tears and sensibility, or losing her own independence by gratefully accepting his half-expressed pompous protection.

"Where," cried Eleonora, as if she that moment recollected them, "where are the girls ? mamma I suppose not down yet ! George and Henry too, are they in town, papa ?"

"They are away at present," returned her father, "on some party of pleasure—but will, I fancy, be home in a few days ; you will be delighted with George's new equipage ; nothing has been seen about town half so stylish or unique ; I assure you he is just now quite the rage. Henry too has effected his exchange into the Guards—and on his beautiful courser

looks most nobly. Among the ladies he is, as usual, a grand point of attraction.” “So much for the heirs of the house of St. Orme—now, mon papa, for the girls—the girls.”

“ As great a rattle as ever,” smiled the father, stretching himself with sultan-like grandeur on a low ottoman ; “ the girls then are gone with lady Emilia de Torville, to make the final arrangements for placing Lucinda at the school where her ladyship’s own education was finished. The terms are monstrous, but nothing inferior would give Lucinda grace and manner : I cannot account for it—the girl has beauty and figure, but is totally deficient in manner or grace—the only St. Orme, I believe, that ever wanted either ; they are appendages to the name, and to be found in woods and sylvan shades ; casting his eye over the tall figure of Augusta, who, with her eyes fixed on an exquisite small bust of the colonel, was wondering how

she could ever have fancied a resemblance between him and her father.

"Well," cried Eleonora, "there are still two of us to be disposed of, beside Augusta, and she will be terribly disappointed to return Miss St. Orme; therefore you do well to put that handsome chit Lucinda out of the way awhile."

"Inclination alone, or cruelty to their lovers, keep my daughters, and I should think my niece, single," replied the colonel, with an air of ineffable grandeur.

"Whew!" cried Eleonora, "that's fair! — But come, Augusta, let me introduce you to my mother; she is by this time prepared to receive us, and will perhaps fancy me unkind in not making my appearance before."

"I confess I have thought you tardy," replied Augusta.

"Oh yes," returned her cousin, carelessly, "I dare say you have; in the country I know it would be esteemed high treason to be so tardy; but my mother is a greater

a greater invalid, my dear, than your own, and very indulgent withal ; then you are to understand that both Amelia and myself live in the gay world, love our mother very much, pay her proper attention in the drawing-room, and trust to domestics in the bed-room and dressing-room ; thus you see we are all independent of each other—following our own fancies, and secure in the good-will of father, mother, brother, and sister : but enough—here we are."

Mrs. St. Orme, seated in an easy chair, wrapped in an expensive dressing-gown, and enveloped in India shawls, peeped out from among them to receive her daughter ; a ray of affection beamed across her pale still face—and while it lingered, gave an interesting maternal character to features bearing more the resemblance of very white dough, than of animated flesh and blood ; but the beam of light soon vanished, and sinking into almost torpidity, she turned from the blooming Eleonora, feebly

feeble uttering—" You look very well ;" and holding out her hand to Augusta, received her warm, affectionate salute with a faint smile, softly saying—" I am most happy to see you, my dear child—I hope you will find no cause of regret for the home you have left—your uncle and cousins will be delighted to make your residence among us long and pleasant ; for myself, I am too much an invalid to promise much—but such as I am you will frequently see me, and I hope bear with me."

Augusta was about to reply, with all the warmth and feeling her aunt's apparent affliction called forth, when she was suddenly checked by Mrs. St. Orme withdrawing her hand, wrapping her shawls more closely around her, and lounging back with closed eyes and speechless features, as if exhausted with the exertion she had made, and longing for quiet repose ; Eleonora marked the sudden start and look of pained surprise with which

Augusta

Augusta noted the change, and laughingly saying—" You will know mamma better in a few days," added—" So you do not wish to know any thing of our journey then, mamma ?"

A heavy sigh shook the old lady's bosom, as she quietly replied—" Any thing you have to say, my love, you know will interest me." Again a spark of light emanated from her small and deep-sunk eye, that for a moment awoke expression, and then died away.

While Eleonora, in her own brilliant sparkling style, strove to amuse her mother, Augusta thought she had never seen her look so handsome ; but it was that mother herself who occupied every feeling of Augusta's mind. She had been accustomed to hear her aunt spoken of as a mild, sweet-tempered, pretty woman, who had followed her husband through distant climes, and encountered much fatigue and danger with him. Such her husband's relations remembered her in youth, since which

which time they had known very little of her; and as such they still spoke of her: but in the dull, heavy mass before her, in that large, inanimate face, where an abundance of colourless flesh almost took away every appearance of feature—in those small grey eyes, nearly hidden, and without expression—and in that self-indulgent, indolent sleeper, not one trace could she find of the being her imagination had pictured. Could that be the soldier's wife who had heroically followed her husband from clime to clime—bivouacked in distant regions, and “faced the cannon's thundering roar?”—was that the woman who gave birth to soldiers?—could that be the mother of her gallant cousin?—nay, could it be she even who had given life and education to the gay, thoughtless Eleonora?—was that the female to preside at the head of an elegant and large establishment—to introduce her daughters—to give order and dignity to her household? Augusta remembered many anecdotes of

of heroism, self-devotion, and suffering, of her aunt's early life, and asked herself, over and over again, the unanswerable question—"What has thus wrecked her mind and enervated her body?" She thought of her own parent—her quick movements—her restless, animated eye—her spare form, and her never-dying anxiety for the welfare of her family—pictured her sufferings, her irritability, her affection, and her cares, until the large tears chased each other over her flushed cheek, as she felt her pride in her parents, and compassion for every member of her uncle's long-envied, independent family, whom she had yet seen, strongly contending with her high-raised notions of wealth and riches. From this trance of feeling Augusta was aroused by the merciless raillery of Eleonora.—"The dear babe," cried she, "is weeping for her lovers and her brats—no Miriam to dress, no roaring Gordon to appease, no Edwin to smile on—no wonder her heart is broken with the loss of such delights!"

delights! But come, we are in the habit of eating dinners here; so come and dress: perhaps some sighing swain may dry your tears, and supply the soft-spoken Edwin's place."

Ashamed of her tears, and half suspecting that Eleonora knew their cause better than she chose to allow, Augusta forced a smile, and followed her out of the apartment, and a servant conducted the cousins to the chamber allotted Augusta. Eleonora looked around carefully.—“ You have in this, and the dressing-room adjoining,” said she, “ all they could think of as necessary to your comfort: should any thing more be wanting, give your orders, and it will appear—the servant outside the door will attend you: and now, Augusta, one word of advice—you have given me many—and I hate unreturned favours: you are escaped from the hand of labour, matter of fact, tears, and sympathy—we have none of it here! every castle, my dear, has its dark closet, and

colonel

colonel St. Orme's is not without one; but seek not to explore it; do as we do—live for the present, forget the past, and think nothing of the future; tread lightly over the ground, then will the briars strewed in your way scarcely be felt: dress your own face in smiles, and disregard the frown which clouds that of your neighbour; in short, live for enjoyment, and yourself: an abundance of means will be afforded you, and no one will claim your services or sympathy. Should some passing events strike you as strange or contradictory, trouble not your head about them, but turn round to that which pleases you better; be as enthusiastic, as animated, as charming as you please; but avaunt religion, sentiment, and tears! We dine at six; so now make yourself beautiful."

Without allowing time for reply, Eleonora summoned the servant and disappeared. Augusta would gladly have been left alone; her head was whirling round, and her heart refusing to beat tranquilly; every

every thing she had seen, every thing she had heard, bore the appearance of art: nature was nowhere visible; an unseen hand conducted the machinery, and every smile, look, and word, was manufactured. Augusta felt trammelled as she never had done before, and was certain that her candour and independence would constantly be breaking bounds. She cast her eyes around the room; it was elegantly furnished, and more spacious than her father's drawing-room: the dressing-room too was large and airy, but the servant's eyes were upon her, and she could not breathe freely — “I am suffocated,” cried she, thinking aloud, and throwing open her travelling dress.

“ Shall I open a distant window a little, ma'am ?” asked the waiting-maid: “ it's coming from the country makes you feel it close; but laws, ma'am, you're all of a shiver, and look very pale: let me fetch you something.”

Augusta was no fainting fine lady, but the

the variety and contention of her feelings, the suppression of her tears, and the distraction of her mind, oppressed her even to choking, and the servant's speedy return with a glass of wine and water alone preserved her from a violent hysterick. Augusta drank it, and expressed a wish to be left alone for a few minutes.—“I shall then be quite well, and will assist you, Martin, in unpacking my trunks.”

Martin smiled.—“Your trunks, ma'am, are all unpacked, and your things placed away; but—” and she hesitated.

“Thank you, Martin; but what?”

“It has struck four, ma'am, and dinner is ordered at six, and nothing puts the colonel so much out of his way as waiting dinner.”

“Are you fearful I shall not be ready in time, Martin?”

“Yes, ma'am; two hours are very little.”

“Make your mind easy, my good girl; let me lay quietly on this sofa by the fire for

for half an hour; my head will then be easier, and I shall be ready for the drawing-room by half-past five."

Martin looked incredulous; but she withdrew, and Augusta, in perfect quietness, soon regained her scattered self-possession. She was aware that the economy and appointments of her uncle's table differed very widely from that of her father's, and that any little awkwardness or want of manner would offend and disgust the fastidious colonel more than a real crime. She had never dined from the tables of her father and grandfather many times in her life, and the few she had, were among those who, like themselves, knew how to be superior and elegant, without pomp or parade.—“Every thing then,” thought she, “depends on my being collected and easy: I would not willingly disgust this nabob uncle of mine: vulgar I think I cannot be; timid I may be, and that he must strive to pardon, as I will strive to conquer.”

By

By the assistance of Martin, Augusta was soon attired for dinner: the modish tirewoman would fain have ornamented her long glossy hair agreeably to the commands of fashion.—“Have you no other combs, Miss?”

“The one pearl comb in your hand is quite sufficient, thank you, Martin.”

“Have you no bandeau, Miss?”

“I never wear one.”

“Nor any flowers?”

“No, Martin—nothing half so smart.”

“Indeed, Miss, I am very sorry; such beautiful hair as yours deserves every ornament: shall I borrow some from our young ladies, Miss?”

“No indeed, thank you, Martin; I have never been accustomed to much ornament, and should only feel awkward if decked out with it.”

Martin tied on the muslin frock; it was very good, and trimmed with fine lace; still it looked only neat: a long white sash, pearl necklace, and bracelets, were

to

to complete the dress.—“ You will look very plain, Miss, among the gay-dressed ladies at our house, I am afraid,” said the anxious waiting-woman, as she fastened the sash.

“ I shall have novelty to recommend me at least then, and that is sometimes very attractive,” replied Augusta, gaily, as fastening her bracelet, she turned from her attendant.

The girl viewed her attentively.—“ I beg your pardon a thousand times, Miss St. Orme,” cried she; “ I thought you would look too simple; but no such thing; I never saw any one look more elegant: why, you are dressed enough for a ball-room. There is Miss Amelia—and she is the very moral of you too, Miss—why she will wear ten times more ornament, and not look so much dressed as you do: but then 'tis coming from the country: I wish I never had; there's nothing like the country.”

So thought Augusta; but fancying she

perceived, in the novel and rather inconvenient appendage of a servant, an inclination to be too loquacious, and recollecting her cousin's mysterious advice, she simply replied—"I am glad you think me sufficiently dressed, Martin;" and having dismissed her, sat down to compose her mind by the only study that can speak peace to the agitated or wearied spirit.

She had been some time seated, when a light tap at the door was followed by the entrance of Eleonora.—"What!" cried she, on perceiving her employ, "so you did not forget your Bible! On my honour, it is a good thing you did not, for the very leaf or cover of such an old prosing thing is not to be found here! Nay, do not spoil your good looks by looking glum; you know I never promised you one; only if I had avowed that no such book found entrance here, you would have flown off in a tangent, crying, 'keep me from the tents of the ungodly;' so, being bent on *bringing you out*, I practised a

little

little *russe* on the occasion, by allowing you all to form your own judgment."

"Do not practise it again, however praiseworthy your intention, my dear Eleonora; for every feeling of my soul revolts at any thing approaching to deceit."

"I know it does, my pretty innocent; but, Augusta, it only shews how *new* you are: the world is deceit—life is deceit—pleasure is deceit—man, woman, and child, [REDACTED] too, for [REDACTED] but there is no deceit in the bare eating a good dinner when hungry; so come down to the drawing-room, and there it is all deceit."

A bitter laugh concluded this tirade; but seeing Augusta's varying countenance, she quickly recovered her usual *nonchalance*, saying—"I hate to hear any thing about candour, for my own candid, bold nature is perpetually leading me into errors that provoke me, not on my own account, but on account of those I have vexed. Now, I ought not to have told you about the

Bible; but I have, and so it cannot be helped—*allons nous.*”

In the drawing-room Augusta met such an assemblage of fine-dressed ladies and gentlemen, that she could not help acknowledging Martin’s fears were well founded. Augusta possessed, however, that intuitive sort of dignity, which, owing its birth to neither time nor circumstance, is never affected by either: thus she moved as cheerfully and as much at ease through her uncle’s superb rooms, surrounded by total strangers, the gaze of one half, and the neglect of the other, as if in her father’s study in the midst of her own family.

“Who is that fine girl with your eldest daughter, colonel?” asked a gentleman: but colonel St. Orme scarce dared raise his eyes; he was tremblingly alive to all that was graceful and finished, and sensitive to agony of any, however trifling, the deviation from elegant good breeding; any thing that in the most distant way hinted

at

at an acquaintance with the *canaille*, shocked his fine-set nerves more than the most dashing turpitude of conduct in high life; and notwithstanding all that Eleonora had said, how could he hope to find the notable daughter of a sectarian merchant, with a large family and small fortune, meet his ideas of a gentlewoman! he dreaded to see her standing fixed in the middle of the room, or hastily popping into the first seat she came to, with tears in her eyes, and covered with blushes—pulling up her gloves with agitated fingers, until she tore them; then in her awkward haste setting her foot on the train of some more finished belle, strive to stammer out an unintelligible, terrified apology.—“She is so provokingly tall too,” thought he; “a little girl would be overlooked.” “I say, colonel,” repeated his friend, “who have we here?—something new, I’ll swear.” “Who do you mean?” asked he, at the same time directing his eye towards Augusta.

gusta. For an instant, even the polished colonel St. Orme was at fault: no awkwardness, no *mauvaise honte*, no pulling at gloves, or treading on trains, was there, in the graceful, easy girl, who, with the kindest smile and most animated countenance, was paying her respects to the large, inanimate, richly-dressed mistress of the house; and "that young lady is my niece, sir—is a St. Orme," was uttered in all the pride of self-satisfaction, by the gratified colonel.

It was with the utmost surprise that Augusta found the aunt she had so lately left enveloped in shawls and cushions, seated on a sofa in the drawing-room, richly dressed, receiving those attentions due to the mistress of a house, and faintly smiling on all around her.—"Have you seen Amelia?" asked she of Augusta, at the same time taking the hand of a fair, blue-eyed, innocent-looking girl. "Eleonora should have introduced you," continued she; "but——"

"But

“ But what, mamma ?” cried Eleonora, darting forward—“ to own the truth, I feared overwhelming Augusta, if I introduced this brightest of all the bright stars which form our family constellation, so immediately on her arrival ; however, as as the ‘ *but* ’ implied error, allow me to make the *amende honorable*.—Augusta, my dear, permit me the honour of introducing you to Miss Amelia St. Orme—a young lady of whom it is impossible to say too much—particularly, as of herself she says—nothing. I flatter myself you will always find her delightful as a resource, when wearied by those who do talk, or when inclined to repose.—Amelia, this is your cousin Augusta St. Orme ; but as she does talk, and will be heard, I shall leave her to make known the many excellent qualities which adorn her character.” So saying, with playful grace, she dropped a low courtesy and instantly turned from them.

Amelia said very little, but there was

something irresistibly attractive and pleasing in the soft sweetness of her smile, the music of her voice, when she did speak, and the mild sunshine of her beamy azure eye. There was expression and sensibility too in her countenance, and something that craved protection, that looked as though she could love devotedly, if warmed and succoured by affection; but would wither and decay if exposed to the chill of unkindness or the frost of neglect; "and such," thought Augusta, as her eyes rested on the upraised fair face of Amelia, "was my aunt when she married lieutenant St. Orme; this must be her second self: alas! alas! how altered! how ruined!"

Eleonora glided swiftly by her.—" You need a Mentor, Augusta. There are more eyes than mine upon you," said she, in an under tone.

Augusta started, and met the fixed gaze of a bold pair of black eyes, expressly saying—" Who the deuce are you that thus

thus dares to think without my direction?"

Augusta shrunk from her in disgust, and at that instant colonel St. Orme addressed her as he advanced—"Augusta, my dear," said he, "my friend, captain Greaves, is desirous of being introduced to you, before we descend to the dining-room."

As the mutual compliment was exchanged, a lightning glance from Eleonora's eye of fire passed over the trio, and a sudden suffusion mounted to the colonel's forehead.

At that moment dinner was announced.—"Allow me the pleasure," said captain Greaves, bowing and offering his arm. All were alike to Augusta; she therefore took it without hesitation. The colonel offered his to her black-eyed antagonist, and led the way, followed by a plain elderly man, who conducted Mrs. St. Orme. The rest of the company followed in order;

der; and Amelia, with whom she could find, brought up the rear.

When the table arrangements allowed time to look around, Augusta found her aunt at the head of it, with the plain gentleman on her left hand, and the black-eyed lady on her right. The colonel of course filled the bottom, and she was herself seated between captain Greaves and a silly-looking young man, whose attention was divided between the good things on the table and a young lady, who, by her splendid dress, appeared as if she would fain hide the commonness and insignificance of her person and manners; and *vis-à-vis* to her sat Eleonora, whose eagle eye neither look nor motion could escape, and who, while apparently trifling and laughing with the utmost carelessness, aimed her shafts of eye and wit with the most unerring precision.

Mrs. St. Orme filled her chair, and sat ostensibly as lady president of her table; but it was soon evident to Augusta that

the

the black-eyed lady, whom she now discovered to be lady Emilia de Torville, was in fact the presiding genius, whose word gave law, and who expected, received, and paid those attentions strictly due to and from the mistress of the mansion; of her quiescent neighbour she took so little notice, that at times her very existence seemed to be forgotten by the proud usurper of her honours, between whom and Eleonora no league of amity appeared to exist. If her ladyship uttered a sentence requiring attention, the haughty girl laughed the louder; if an opinion or a sentiment, without appearing to notice it, she immediately broached an opposite opinion, or a sentiment in contradiction, and invariably won every body to her standard.—“Colonel,” cried lady Emilia, from the top of the table, “you neglected to introduce your niece to me, and there she sits, puzzling her wits to discover who I am: do pray repair your fault this instant!”

The colonel was beginning to speak when Eleonora, with a laugh of the most thoughtless gaiety, exclaimed—"Augusta, my dear Augusta, listen! here is an old acquaintance of yours, Henry de Montford, declares he has danced with you a thousand times in Devonshire, or Somersetshire, or somewhere—he is not exactly sure where; but at one of those unknown places he lost his heart, and has been seeking for you ever since, to demand that you will return it, or, as in honour bound, give him your own in return."

"Poor young man, I am really sorry for his loss, but must beg to assure him that I did not find the article in question, or I would most cheerfully have returned it to him for safe keeping," replied Augusta, in a tone of lively *bardinage*, at the same time stealing a glance at lady Emilia, whom to her astonishment she saw joining in the general laugh without the slightest shade of anger.

"De

and “ De Montford, do you hear that ?” resumed Eleonora ; “ now the fact is, I verily believe you never saw Miss St. Orme before ; but you are a good fellow, therefore take courage upon it, and if your bosom’s tenant has indeed taken flight without due notice, rely on my good offices, and they are not to be despised.—Augusta, tell me truly—do you know this favourite of mine ?”

Augusta replied in a tone of raillery, and Eleonora having set up the racket, kept it in uninterrupted play until she adroitly contrived, to the evident vexation of lady Emilia, to make Mrs. St. Orme withdraw.

In the drawing-room, now brilliantly lighted with Argand lamps and burning perfumes, they met the colonel’s youngest daughter.—“ What, Lucinda ! my youngster ! ” cried Eleonora, affectionately kissing her polished cheek, “ are you here ? Papa told me you were gone to school, or some such nonsense.”

“ I coaxed

“ I coaxed them to bring me back this morning; but I am to go, lady Emilia says, in a few days, and I am *so sorry*, because mamma often wants me, and Amelia likes me to be here; and I know I shall hate school and all the people there.”

“ Delightful!” returned Eleonora; but her look was thoughtful for an instant: then beckoning Augusta—“ Another wonder!” said she; “ another St. Orme! but do not be alarmed, we are not quite numberless: this ends the female part of our store. Lucinda, *they say*, is going to school, but that is *if I* can spare her; is it not, Lucy?” fondly patting her cheek.

Eleonora might have continued talking much longer without interruption, for all Augusta’s faculties were chained in admiration. Never had she seen a face so faultless—a form so perfect; large mellow hazel eyes, deeply fringed with long silken lashes, lit up a face of the most perfect Grecian mould. The parting of her beautiful

tiful ruby dips discovered teeth of pearly whiteness, and her smile was perfection itself.—“Oh, who,” exclaimed Augusta, as she gazed at her, “who would send such a creature as this from home, to be loved and fondled by strangers?”

“She is *une petite gauche*,” returned Eleonora; “an unpardonable sin in the sight of some folks, and like all other sins you see brings its own punishment; a year or two, however, wont hurt, and may perhaps polish my *little* sister.”

“The only chance she has of getting the finish so peculiar to her family is a school!” exclaimed a voice close behind Eleonora, which Augusta perceived came from lady Emilia: “it is astonishing to me, that, with such models before her, she should be so awkward.”

“So awkward!” repeated Augusta, with a smile, surveying the lovely girl.

“Oh, horribly so! and very uninformed; but at Mount House they will quickly

ly transform her, and render her fit for society ; she shall go on Monday."

A scathing flash from Eleonora's dark eye passed over the bold speaker, as, taking Augusta's arm, and beckoning Lucinda, she walked to the farthest end of the suit of rooms without speaking ; and then, as if forgetting lady Emilia and all the world, challenged the every-day-looking girl Augusta had seen at dinner, and who was now introduced as Miss Cooper, to a game of bagatelle, which she played with unbounded spirit until the gentlemen came in.

Henry de Montford and captain Greaves came towards Augusta, who, with Amelia and Lucinda, occupied a window-seat.—"Lucinda, you used to be good-natured," said De Montford.

"And so I am now, Henry, and not so foolish but I know what you mean," returned she playfully, rising from her seat.

De Montford gently separated the cousins, and dropped himself between them—

"Am

“Am I forgiven, Miss St. Orme,” said he, in a voice of manly sweetness, “for lending myself to Eleonora’s *russe de guerre*? She was bent on distancing lady Emilia, and it was impossible to refuse one’s aid. I adore any one who thwarts that woman.”

“And, of course, *vice versa*; so unless I wish to be hated, I must not be civil to her—those are your terms, are they not?” replied Augusta.

“Something very like it, but I will not prejudice,” rejoined De Montford. At that instant Amelia quitted her seat on a sign from her father—“Good Heavens, what a fool I was to let her go!” exclaimed De Montford; “but it is almost impossible to circumvent their tricks. You are designed for Greaves I see.”

Without noticing the latter sentence, Augusta remarked what a very sweet girl Amelia was.

“She is,” replied De Montford, “a very good, mild, sweet girl; in some hands she would

would make a charming woman, and into such hands I wish, but dare not hope, she may fall: she has no native energy, nor I think a great deal of feeling, and this is fortunate. Mrs. St. Orme must have been very like her when young."

"Like who?" asked captain Greaves, standing close before them.

"Like Amelia," answered Augusta.—"Do you not think so?"

"Perhaps she might; but I hate milk-and-water girls: Eleonora is worth a thousand of her."

"That she is; but Eleonora is matchless," said De Montford.

The captain sat down by the side of Augusta, as Miss Cooper beckoned De Montford.—"Do you not think lady Emilia de Torville very beautiful, Miss Augusta?" asked he.

"Lady Emilia!" cried Augusta, with her native candour, "why she is any thing but beautiful! such a bold, vulgar woman, nobody would fancy *her* a lady—a gentlewoman

woman I feel certain she cannot be, with her great black eyes."

"Oh, I understand you; a pretty, blushing, modest deportment, and small eyes, not black, are essential to gain your favour; that is rather unfortunate for some of us who have passed for tolerably handsome too," said the noble captain, turning on her a bold, self-sufficient face, furnished with large staring eyes of the blackest hue.

"Do you know," continued he, "lady Emilia is considered by others, and thinks herself a decided beauty, and that in this house she reigns paramount?—You will have enough to do therefore, if you enter the lists against her, whether in authority, taste, or beauty."

"I shall never dispute either the one or the other with her ladyship, but shall form my own opinions, and think as I will, perfectly independent of lady Emilia, or any other person," replied Augusta, as, rising with an air of dignity, she walked towards a grand piano, on which Amelia was playing

ing with considerable taste and feeling, and left captain Greaves to stare in amazement at the perfect *nonchalance* with which a country girl could treat him.

The evening at length passed away, and one by one the company dropped off. Mrs. St. Orme looked mournfully round the rooms, then at Miss Cooper, who it appeared was domesticated there—heaved two or three deep sighs—encountered a disdainful and withering glance from her husband's proud eye, and then drawing within herself, she gently bid them good night, and retired, followed by Lucinda.

Augusta gladly followed her example, and retired to her room, more fatigued and exhausted than she ever remembered to have felt after performing the many duties of her father's house.—“And yet,” cried she, as, after having dismissed the servant, she sat down by a good fire in an easy chair, with a sandwich and wine and water before her, “what have I said or done to fatigue myself?—Rode twenty miles

iniles in an easy carriage—dressed—ate my dinner—and spent the evening as I have so often heard Eleonora describe, and so often longed to do: surely this is what I have always wished to be—one of a family raised by independence above the ‘cannot afford’s,’ and ‘be careful’s,’ which make one feel there is a state one would rather fill than the one in which we are; but,” and she held her head, “it is my head, my spirits that suffer from fatigue—it is the different style of living; but I know I shall prefer it; all here is so superior.” Thus striving to cheat herself into composure, Augusta concluded her first day in London, by those Christian duties which never fail to compose the spirits, and slept the sound sleep of innocence and peace, under a roof where such sleep and such virtues were almost total strangers.

CHAPTER IV.  
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L'homme, à ses débuts dans le monde, est comme la plante delicate sortant, au mois du mai, d'une serre, le moindre vent glacé le saisit, le moindre air hostile le blesse.

VISCOMTE D'ARLINCOURT.

“ I THOUGHT I should catch you before you went down,” said one of the most musical voices, as Augusta, roused by the opening of her door, turned hastily round, and the beautiful face of Lucinda St. Orme met her view.—“ Do you know,” continued she, “ that since you came I am more sorry than before to go to this frightful school, and mamma has been crying about it this morning, and 'tis very seldom mamma cries now; but lady Emilia wont care much for her; no one dares indeed to contradict lady Emilia but Eleonora, and sometimes Miss Cooper, but not often.—

Do

Do you like lady Emilia?" asked the poor girl, with childish earnestness.

Augusta smiled kindly on her, as she replied—" You forget, dear Lucinda, how little I have seen of her ladyship, and that I know nothing about her; but I recollect very well when nothing would have given me so much pleasure as the prospect you have of going to a superior school, and associating with other young ladies, and being taught every thing that could improve my mind and manners."

" Will going to school then, Augusta, make me like you?—I wont mind it if it will, though that woman did propose it, for I should like to be such as you are—oh, so much!"

" I hope it will make you much better than I am, Lucinda, for my papa did not allow me to go to any expensive school, and I have been obliged to supply the defects myself as well as lay in my power," returned Augusta.

Lucinda's countenance fell, her fine eyes filled

filled with tears, and she heaved a deep sigh as she replied—" Ah no! nothing will make me better than you—we are not any of us so good ; but I am sorry you approve of schools, for papa is easily persuaded by strangers ; and lady Emilia would perhaps have given it up to please you, for I heard her say last night she must make you have a good opinion of her, or else you would be a spy on her, a nasty thing ! I am sure you will hate her though !"

How long the artless Lucinda would have talked, or what she would have said, it is impossible to determine, had not the entrance of Eleonora put a stop to her volubility—" You have an early visitor, Augusta," said the elder sister, casting a suspicious eye on Lucinda, " and I am afraid a very verbose one." Having dismissed her, Eleonora continued—" Well, my dear Augusta, what say you for to-day ?—If you are not starved by that time, I intend after breakfast to take you with me to two or three *grande magazins du mode* :

mode: nay, do not look alarmed, you need not lay out a shilling; but we shall see lots of people there, and I must drop a few cards, to let the world know I am alive again: you are aware that I visit my own friends at my own time; do you be equally independent—either form your own circle, a thing easily done, or drop into mine, or into my father's, or into—into Amelia's, if you can find it out; she visits a vast deal, and has, I suppose, her own particular friends."

"I do not clearly understand," began Augusta.

Her cousin quickly interrupted with—
"I know it, Augusta; but time will reveal perhaps too much; in the mean time, rest assured I have an abundance of affection for Amelia: but, my dear, I love decision—I love character and mind, and at all times prefer the oak to the ivy."

"Yet, Eleonora, the oak is often rooted up by the storm, while the more humble ivy remains unhurt."

“ I know it, Augusta, I know it; but the oak when rooted up is noble—the ivy mean and contemptible; the oak in every stage is grand, and will support an edifice for ages, even when decaying itself! the phagedenous ivy, even while it clings, destroys the friend who sustains it, and while it sadly smiles in evergreen, withers and poisons all around! no, no, unless you can stand alone, you are but weeds in the ground. But I hate prosing or moralizing; *toujours gaie* is and shall be my motto, however contradictory the Fates may choose to be—heigh-ho! Apropos—Augusta, what think you of the gallant captain Greaves—is he not *un homme tout au fait fini*—the very man to be proud of?”

“ Of all the sons of men, he is surely the most disgusting!” exclaimed Augusta; “ but I have disposed of him my own way already; he is such a warm admirer of lady Emilia de Torville, and they are so much alike, that I am sure they were created for each other; it would be a sin to

to keep them separate, for sure such a pair were never seen."

"Lord help your dear, silly little heart!" returned Eleonora, "why they are already in league and compact more closely united than any modern pair where Hymen has rivetted chains! no, no, they will never marry! people who know each other thoroughly seldom marry."

"That may be the case in a certain circle," replied Augusta, thoughtfully: "Heaven make me thankful I do not belong to that circle! But now, Eleonora, let me in turn ask a question: what think you of the man whose very name never escaped your lips while in the country, of the young and handsome Henry de Montford?"

"Think of him!" cried Eleonora, with rapidly-changing complexion, "oh, he is the bright spot in our moral creation—the Oasis in the desert—the spirit that keeps us from putridity! oh, Augusta, you know not his worth, nor the worthlessness of the

vile crew you have and will see him mingle with! nor will you ever know how to estimate that generous self-devotion which thus plunges the purest of God's creatures into the midst of corruption, unless indeed, and the thing is not unlikely—but no, no, Augusta, you may esteem, honour, respect Henry as much as your warm, unsophisticated heart will let you; but you must not—dare not love him!—Ah, Heaven be praised, there is the breakfast-bell! so now to it with what appetite you may: but no more of De Montford, for I have brains, and they will surely madden if I venture to think."

Colonel St. Orme was in the breakfast-parlour, and received his niece and daughter with a great deal of pompous kindness, inquired particularly if Augusta had every thing in her apartments that could contribute to her comforts, and complimented her highly on her appearance, and the finished ease of her manners.

While the colonel was speaking, lady
Emilia

Emilia entered the room, and taking up the subject of Augusta's behaviour as her uncle left it, exclaimed rather abruptly—“Upon my word, colonel, you are right; Miss Augusta would shame half our town-bred belles.—Where, my dear, did you contrive to pick up such good manners? I never before saw the like from the country,” continued she, turning towards Augusta.

Augusta's face crimsoned as in lofty accents she said—“Do you do me the honour of speaking to me, madam?”

Eleonora's dark eyes danced in delight as her ladyship, in the blandest manner, replied—“I did indeed, my dear, with surprise ask where you contrived to pick up such very elegant manners in a country town.”

“In my own father's house, my lady, in the refined society to which I have always been accustomed, and *there* my manners excite no surprise by their superiority,” returned Augusta in the same lofty

tone; and turning immediately from her, held out a hand to Amelia, and bid her good morning with the utmost cheerfulness.

Amelia smiled, and coolly touching her cousin's fingers, passed on to lady Emilia, and paid her the customary morning compliments with soft politeness; then bowing coolly round, took her usual place: the morning plans were discussed, and various ways of killing time brought forward in succession.

Eleonora heard them all with careless playful indifference, until soon after breakfast, when captain Greaves, De Montford, and sir William Hargrave, were announced. Miss Cooper came in soon after with her netting-box, and taking a place by Augusta, began good-naturedly to shew her work, and to ask a multitude of questions about the country, her journey, &c. until some observation of sir William's called her attention that way.—“ Well, I declare,” said she, “ if that old baronet

baronet is not here again! we have seen little of his sirship since Eleonora went into the country: poor girl! I suppose, after all, she must have him. Papa says, that, with all her rattle, she is the best of the family, and if she could put up with that ugly old fellow, perhaps it would settle every thing, and restore peace; but Eleonora is not the girl to be made a bargain of. Why did he not take a fancy to that pretty quiet Amelia? Lady Emilia would have been glad to get her off her hands, I dare say; not that the little creature is much bar to her will and way either."

"Too much friendship here by half," said captain Greaves, standing before Miss Cooper; "when young ladies sit apart, they are generally planning mischief against us poor fellows.—Will you allow me, Miss Augusta, the honour of shewing you some of the lions this fine morning?"

"I would accept your offer with

F 4 pleasure,

pleasure, sir," replied Augusta, "but that a prior engagement prevents me."

"What, Augusta," cried the colonel, laughing, "talking of offers and prior engagements already! Our young men must then take care of their hearts in good earnest."

"Augusta is right," said Eleonora, "to put you all on your guard. But the engagement she now talks of is, I suspect, with me; we are going to make a round this morning; I can of course have the carriage, colonel? Augusta you know is my *protégé*, that is, *as far as she chooses*; but few young ladies are more independent than Miss St. Orme."

"Pray, my dear, whom do you mean to designate by that term?" asked her father; "I have heard it used promiscuously for either yourself or cousin; but such a breach of etiquette is opposed to my ideas of propriety—you will therefore have the goodness to determine to which of you precedence belongs."

"Nay,

“ Nay, dear sir,” replied Eleonora, with an air of the most ridiculous gravity, “ I am beyond measure surprised that a gentleman of your high refinement and courtly manners should name the offensive subject of age before such damsels as your niece and daughter! It is certain, however, that I made my august appearance in this nether world some months before my cousin; but having been accustomed in my dear uncle’s circle to hear her called ‘ Miss St. Orme,’ I most happily, and with due humility, became ‘ Miss Eleonora;’ from this hour, however, I assume the first name, and to all present announce my friend as Miss *Augusta* St. Orme.”

“ Colonel,” cried lady Emilia, with evident marks of impatience, “ we are sadly losing time; my carriage waits for you and Lucinda.—Amelia, how do you dispose of yourself?”

“ I have a singing lesson to take, and then I go to Mrs. Bramwell’s morning

F 5 *conversazione,*”

conversazione," replied Amelia, with her soft smile.

"Ay, go, my girl, and learn to talk; by all means learn to talk.—Augusta, Lu-cinda, the carriage waits; your bonnets, and away in a moment.—Adieu, good folks, we shall dine at home," cried Eleonora, in one of her gayest flights, and taking a hand of each, she disappeared in a moment.

They were whirling rapidly through the crowded streets, when, after looking a long time at her cousin, who sat absorbed in thought, Eleonora slightly touched her shoulder, gaily saying—"Why, Augusta, child, you may as well be riding along the narrow roads of Devon, as rolling over the broad pavement of the metropolis; one would think you had been born in the city, and were blinded by smoke."

"No, not that—it is an excess of light which blinds me. I wish, Eleonora, you had not brought me to this place—I am the child of nature, and shall never be able

able to exist where all I see and breathe is art."

"Did I not tell you, Augusta, I would shew you the world as it is, not as you have been accustomed to see it; the world as people who live in it make it, not as your good little methodist circle represents it?"

"I knew I had never lived much in the world, and had heard it described as differing much from my home, yet, Eleonora, lady Belmore, lady Cardonnel, and many others whom I have been in the habit of visiting, live in even superior life to yourself; they are the world, and they are—"

"They are not like us," interrupted Eleonora. "But, my good girl, you have never been admitted behind the scenes: 'the world's a stage, and all the men and women are players; in all families there is a sort of parlour scene, in which there is a great deal of acting, and those who go not behind know but little of the matter: you have never been behind at lady

Belmore's; but, *entre nous*, there are those who have. Ask Clara Cooper what she knows of them."

"Not I.—'Where ignorance is bliss,
'tis folly to be wise.' It is a pity to know sufficient of the world to put one out of conceit with it at the very threshold of life. Nothing surprises me more than seeing such an inelegant girl in your family as this Miss Cooper."

"She is a good girl though," returned Eleonora, with a sigh; "some girls would take much more on themselves than Clara does in her situation. You stare, and well you may; but Clara is no unimportant person in the family of colonel St. Orme; yet she is kind-hearted and *virtuous*."

"And lady Emilia?" said Augusta.

"Is neither the one nor the other, but a wretch, a demon, a very female devil, one who will lead, drive, or lure to ruin; but she shall never succeed with me; no, I am, and I will ever be, her scourge, her torment,

torment, her superior!" interrupted Eleonora, in the bitterest tones of violent indignation.

At this moment the carriage drew up at the entrance of madame Dupont's splendid and fashionable rooms. All traces of anger disappeared from the handsome features of Eleonora, as, with a light, firm step she passed over madame's broad stairs, gaily humming a new opera air.

Bonnets, caps, turbans, and dresses, flowers, feathers, gauzes, and fans, were all tried on, examined, turned over, and commented upon in succession. Eleonora laughed, rattled, and knew something of all the gay crew who crowded the rooms of this favourite of fashion.

Augusta lost all her sombre thoughts, and entered into the frivolity of the scene with all the joyousness of her buoyant spirit. A very pretty young woman was trying on a variety of caps and bonnets, in all of which she looked interesting, but not one could please exactly; amused by

the childish coquetry of her manners, and the compliments paid her by the smiling mistress of the show, and the party who surrounded the young beauty, Augusta noticed her particularly, and taking up a hat she had just laid down, tied it over her own flowing locks.

“ Ah,” cried the young lady, capriciously, “ it exactly suits you; keep it, I implore you; never was any thing half so elegant or becoming: and now having suited yourself, do pray assist me, for I am sure you have exquisite taste.”

“ All I have is at your service,” replied Augusta, smiling; “ but here are too many to choose from. What is it you want your hat for? the carriage, promenade, or what else?”

“ Why,” returned the pretty stranger, “ to whisper a secret in your ear——Ah, I declare there is Miss St. Orme in the land of the living again! why, they said she had banished herself rather than marry old Hargrave. How handsome she looks!

Poor

Poor girl! 'tis Hargrave or nothing, I fancy. Well, now for the hat. You, of course, know nothing about the St. Ormes. The truth is then, I am going to be married, and want a hat to appear in the Park directly afterwards. So now, do help me to look for one that will make me look as lovely as you do at this moment!"

"Olivia, my dear," said an elderly lady with her, "something is due to etiquette; do you know you have fastened yourself on a total stranger?"

"Yes, mamma; and in that we are both even; I am sure this young lady is a gentlewoman, and she supposes I am the same, and beyond that we neither of us care."

Augusta had strolled from room to room with her new acquaintance for an hour, scarcely keeping Eleonora in sight, who, fully occupied in trifling and coquetting with the gentlemen, appeared to have forgotten all the world beside, when Olivia started, saying—"Oh, I declare here

here is Beauchamp ! now you will see him, and tell me do you not think him beautiful ?"

Before Augusta could reply, a very fine, but very coxcomical young man held out both hands towards them, as he sighed—" My sweet Olivia, I have been seeking you these two hours. What a darling tyrant you are ! Now do you not expect retribution soon when my day of power comes ?—But," looking full in Augusta's face, " whom have I the pleasure of addressing in my little Olivia's companion ?"

" Good Heavens, Beauchamp, what a Gothic question !"

" But one that should decidedly be answered," interrupted Augusta, in a commanding tone; and at the same time beckoning Eleonora, who she saw close by—" May I beg the favour, Miss St. Orme, that you will introduce me to this lady, and this lady to me ?" said Augusta, with a tone of almost hauteur.

Olivia

Olivia started, and dropped Augusta's arm, as Eleonora, with an arch triumphant smile, introduced—"The eldest daughter of Augustus St. Orme, esquire, to the only daughter of general Bernard," adding—"I wish you both much pleasure of the acquaintance.—But, Augusta, my dear, we have several visits to pay, when you are at leisure. The important hat, I hope, is chosen. I am just going to say farewell to the Tufnells."

So saying she disappeared, and Miss Bernard again seized the arm of Augusta.—"Well," cried she, as if just regaining the power of speech, "I never thought it possible to love a St. Orme; but positively I must love you, if you will let me; and if not, there is an end of the acquaintance, for we do not visit the St. Ormes, though we sometimes meet them."

"I am only a visitor for a few weeks at my uncle's, and shall decidedly form no acquaintance that is not received by the

the colonel," replied Augusta, with the dignity of a duchess.

"Bravo!" said the gentleman; "I admire that spirit. Allow me, Miss Augusta, to explain. A little rivalry exists between the families; there is a commanding majesty about the *colonel* that the *general* kicks at, and a laughing devil in your cousin's eye that Olivia dreads and shrinks from; but that should be no hinderance to your frequent and friendly meetings. I have property in the West, and it is probable we may often meet there."

Nothing more could be said. In the highest possible spirits Eleonora carried off her sister and cousin, looked in at several shops, dropped an abundance of cards, talked loud and fast, and at last reached home just in time to dress for dinner.

"I have neither read nor wrote to-day," thought Augusta, as she, to the great annoyance of her servant, put on the same dress

dress she had worn the day before, only using a turquoise necklace and bracelets instead of pearl; "but I will come up after dinner—that was my best time at home.—Ah, dear mamma, could you but fancy the conduct of this house, your simple taste and single mind would shrink in disgust." Turning round at this moment, a large bandbox met her view.—"What is that, Martin?" asked she, in surprise.

"Indeed, Miss, I don't know," returned the girl: "it is directed for you, and came from madame Dupont's; but I did not venture to open it."

"Pray do then, Martin, for I have not purchased any thing there."

Martin opened the box, and drew forth the very identical hat Augusta had admired in the morning.—"How provoking!" thought she; "but I suppose I must pay for my folly, by keeping what I cannot afford."

"Oh, this is superb!" cried Martin.

Augusta

Augusta raised her eyes in surprise, and saw the girl displaying a large expensive dress shawl, with sundry exclamations on its elegance and beauty.—“ It is very handsome,” said Augusta ; “ but here is some mistake, for I have never seen the shawl before.”

“ Laws, Miss, I hope you are going to have it though, for I didn’t see one among your things fit for the opera,” cried the waiting-maid.

“ What are you puzzling yourself about ?” asked Eleonora, skipping into the room.

“ Why, I fancy the fairies have been at work here,” replied Augusta ; “ these things are sent from madame Dupont’s, though, I assure you, without any order from me. The shawl must be returned without loss of time.”

“ Why so? do you not like it?”

“ The article in itself is beautiful—so is De Montford’s fine horse; but neither of them

them belong to me, nor do I need either," replied Augusta, playfully.

"There we differ, my pretty cousin," said Eleonora, throwing the shawl over Augusta's shoulders; "De Montford's horse would be a terrible bore to you, seeing you do not ride; but this fine affair is absolutely necessary to grace my box at the opera this evening: I therefore took the liberty of ordering this, and the hat in question, to be sent, hoping you will not feel mortified by accepting them at my hands."

Augusta gracefully accepted the present; but after thanking her volatile cousin affectionately, a thought suddenly struck her—captain Greaves had met them at madame's, and laughingly proposed presenting them with any of the varied finery before them; she had afterwards seen him and Eleonora a long time together, inspecting hats, caps, &c. No sooner had the thought occurred, than, with the rapidity of lightning, she followed Eleo-

nora

nora into the dressing-room, and catching her arm, cried, in almost breathless agitation—"Tell me, and tell me truly, is this in very deed your own present? or am I, without my knowledge, to be placed under obligations to another?"

Eleonora turned round, and fixing her piercing eyes on Augusta, read, in an instant, the suspicions of her undisguised heart.—"To me alone are you indebted for the bagatelle," returned she impressively, and without a smile. "Learn to know me better, Augusta; I have no sentiment, no parade of feeling, and love but few—you are among that few. If the fates have decreed you a sacrifice, I will not assist them; in my keeping, your honour is safe from compromise. But, Augusta, look to yourself; for if the sale of the soul would save the body, there are who would sell the soul, ay, and the souls of all their kith and kin—there are likewise that would buy them; but if you love not, accept not, and you—oh no, you can

can never fall so low as the rich, voluptuous, and corrupt Greaves: though he follows as your shadow, spurn him, hate him!"

Augusta stood transfixed; for scorn and contempt shone in every feature, and inflated the perfect figure of her cousin; that cousin who, in the country, appeared never to have admitted care into the gay region of her bosom, or to have given any circumstance a second thought. How was she transformed in London! she found her a very Machiavel, exerting mind and thought to bring about her own ends, or contravert those of others; full of energy, observation, and even laborious action; penetrating, severe, and overruling, struggling against her feelings, and in some cases evincing warm affection.

From these contemplations Augusta was aroused by the second dinner-bell. In the drawing-room she found all the family, the party she had seen the day before, and several strangers. As they were

going

going to the dining-room, a fine, tall young man came leaping over the banisters, and arresting Eleonora in the hall, saluted her with animated affection, and desired she would that instant point out Augusta to him.

“With great pleasure, my dear George, for you are this instant interrupting her progress.—Augusta, this is my brother George; now let him speak for himself.”

And speak for himself he did: by good generalship he secured a place at Augusta’s left hand, and it was to little purpose that captain Greaves, who sat at her right hand, attempted to gain attention, or even to make himself heard: George St. Orme possessed the tact of his sister, and could, with ease and seeming unconsciousness, contradict or interrupt every word and action of another without apparent rudeness.

It was Saturday evening, and the opera a thing of course. To Augusta the opera was a scene of enchantment; every faculty was

was charmed, every sense entranced. She knew enough of the language to understand the songs and the plot; but it required attention, and Augusta gave it undivided.

At the close of the first act she ventured to breathe and look around; the smile and bow of Miss Bernard and her lover immediately saluted her.—“How the deuce, Augusta, do you know them already?” exclaimed George.

Augusta related the circumstance as it simply occurred.

“Admirable!” cried he; “what a triumph for Elly! You must know, they pretend to cut us, though my father gave the coarse general his first commission, and thus raised him from the drum-head, where his merits would have kept him till this time, had he not, by some odd accident, recommended himself to my father’s notice. He has, as you see, got forward, and like all vulgar *parvenues*, would fain forget how he rose. My father cannot

forget it; hence arises a sort of undeclared war: the general's family affect to look down on the colonel's, the colonel's really do so on the general's. Yon girl is certainly pretty. Well, she took a violent fancy to a handsome brother I have: the general stormed, the captain sneered, smiled contempt, and made his conge; since that we have not visited. Elly overlooks, or talks *at* them, as the fit takes her, and the pretty Olivia affects to be disgusted at her, though the fact is, she fears her. I should tell you, there is a major Bernard in the world, who they think has a fancy for my sister, or she for him, 'tis much the same thing, and neither of it true; Elly would as soon marry a worm as such a poor soul; but they are just now at the very top of their pride. Beauchamp is the younger son of a nobleman, who having little beyond his birth, is willing to eke out his few paternal acres by the old pawnbroker's hoarded guineas —Mrs. Bernard's father was a pawnbroker in

in some odd corner of the world, and dying a few years since, left to his daughter, who never before remembered him, the immense sum of fifty thousand pounds: 'My papa,' and 'My papa's legacy,' have never since been forgotten, though the green door, and golden balls, are quite so. It is most ridiculous her taking such a fancy to you this morning: oh, if she could have fancied you a St. Orme, how she would have shunned you!"

"So I suspected, from some remarks she made on first seeing Eleonora, and took the earliest opportunity of declaring myself, though half afraid of losing such an amusing companion."

"I would have given something to have witnessed your farcical introduction; but the second act is commencing, and I may as well bid adieu to you for an hour. Oh, there is something inexpressibly delightful in the very contemplation of that freshness of mind, that newness to the world, which in you extracts pleasure from those very

scenes and circumstances that weary the greater part of this brilliant assembly! if I ever should have a family, they shall decidedly be bred up in the country, far from the poisonous contagion of this hateful metropolis, so subversive of purity."

Augusta scarcely heard the last few sentences, her whole soul was absorbed in the scenes before her, and the opera ended before she could again attend to the observations of her intelligent cousin.

While waiting in the lobby until their carriage could draw up, Augusta felt a slight tap on her shoulder, and turning round, met the ready smile of Miss Bernard.—"I could not," said she, "allow you to go without congratulating you on the pleasure I am sure you have enjoyed this evening: I would give a thousand pounds, Augusta, to see any thing in the world so perfectly new as this was to you."

"Oh," replied Augusta, "I could introduce you to scenes of greater novelty than any I have seen in London; and what

what is more, will engage that you shall be as interested and delighted as your heart can wish, and that at a very trifling expence."

During this short colloquy, Beauchamp and George St. Orme, who met as old friends, were talking together; Olivia interrupted them by pulling her lover's arm, and exclaiming—"Did you ever hear the like of that, Beauchamp? this dear Augusta talks of wonders!"

Augusta laughingly repeated what she had before said.

"I do not doubt it: Miss Augusta, my dear Olivia, has lived for reason and usefulness—you and I for a heartless world," replied the young man, charmed for an instant out of his coxcombry and his folly.

"What," cried Eleonora, her bright eyes flashing across them—"what, the honourable Charles Beauchamp moralizing in the lobby of the Opera House of a Saturday night!—Have a care, Olivia Bernard—hold him fast; for if this moralizing

continues until Sunday, you lose him, spite of *interest*."

"And what would Miss St. Orme lose if her *amiable gaieté de cœur* played her false?" asked Beauchamp, with the most coxcomical air and tone.

"That which some people never possessed—*independence*!" replied Eleonora, in the keen tone of pointed irony.—"And now for the blinding scene at lady Dareall's," cried she as the carriage drove off; "there, Augusta, you shall see more light and more jewels than ever dazzled your eyes before."

"But, Eleonora, it is midnight—I should rather say, Sunday morning; you are surely going home!" cried Augusta in affright.

Eleonora burst into a loud laugh.—"Sunday, forsooth! why this is the most brilliant party of the week: you know nothing, see nothing, unless you are of lady Dareall's Saturday night parties. However, Augusta, every day is much alike

alike here: you may bid adieu to church, until you march there, a godly little group, headed by papa and mamma again."

For a few moments Augusta was silent; she hesitated to determine which scale preponderated—whether she should adhere to an observance of the Sabbath hitherto laid down as her duty, or whether, while a part of her uncle's family, it was her duty to conform to the customs of his family. Her hesitation was but for a few moments.—“To ‘keep holy the Sabbath-day’ is a positive command,” said she; “one I cannot, dare not break. To laughter and ridicule I am invulnerable—to the pangs of an accusing conscience sensibly alive. Over you, Eleonora, I have no command; but I will not do a wrong thing, and know it—I enter not the doors of lady Dareall this night.”

“Why, Augusta, are you mad? only fancy my talking in that way whilst at your father's: when you are at Rome,

child, do as the people of Rome do," exclaimed Eleonora, not without anger.

"I suppose," returned Augusta, "it is in compliance with that adage I am here now; for you well know, that at my father's we retire early on a Saturday, in order to prepare for Sunday. But I claim your own permission, oft repeated, of doing as I choose, without fear of offence; I cannot accompany you without infringing on a positive duty, and that I *will not do.*"

"But I have set my heart on it, Augusta."

"I am sorry for it, Eleonora; you did wrong."

They were at the door.—"Will you go in?"

"Certainly not."

"Don't be *foolish*, Augusta."

"I will not be *sinful*, Eleonora."

"I shall stay but half an hour."

"I have no objection to sit in the carriage, and wait for you."

"That

“ That must not be allowed,” said George, who now spoke for the first time. —“ Elly, if you choose to go in, I will take Augusta home, and return for you ; but do not tease her any more.”

“ No, George, we will both go home ; why should I play my solo at the Dare-alls ?” A bitter laugh followed.

“ Home !” thundered George ; then taking his sister’s trembling hand, softly whispered—“ Elly, my dear Elly, recollect yourself.”

But the exhortation was vain ; Eleonora was dreadfully agitated. As the lights gleamed on her livid countenance and glaring eye, Augusta felt her own eyes fill with tears, and pitied the creature she now began to consider a victim, even while she condemned her.

CHAPTER V.
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Nothing leads more to false estimates, than our suffering that natural desire of happiness congenial to the human mind to mislead us by its eagerness. The object in itself is not only natural, but laudable; but the steps which are supposed to lead to it, when ill regulated, never attain the end.

HANNAH MORE.

“AND this is Sunday morning! my first Sunday in London!” sighed Augusta, as she sat waiting a summons to breakfast. “How much I longed for this visit! and how inadequate to my expectations are the pleasures I have derived from it! This day will perhaps change the face of affairs. Eleonora spoke lightly of the Sabbath, but some part of the family will certainly pay respect to it. ‘The sound of the church-going bell’ is heard all around, and some of them will surely attend to its invitation. My poor aunt will probably go there.—

Ah,

Ah, dear home! ' with all thy faults I love thee still!' Dear mamma, who will dress her this morning? She is really an invalid; yet her religious duties are never neglected—no, nor any other duty. And, after all our privations and care, I begin to suspect we are happier than this family."

A joyous shout of laughter on the stairs, followed by the voice of hilarity, broke in upon the cogitations of Augusta, and appeared to contradict them.

At the moment that the breakfast-bell summoned her to the parlour, Miss Cooper came running to meet her, laden with Sunday finery, exclaiming, in the glad voice of youthful delight—"My dear Augusta, we have such a delightful plan for to-day! We are all of us to sail to Richmond in sir William's beautiful new yacht —dine there, and return in the evening. The captain will meet us there. He is the most delightful fellow in the world. Sir William has a lovely box at Richmond! Won't it be charming? particularly to you,

who have never seen Richmond, and all the heavenly country round!"

"I shall enjoy seeing Richmond very much," replied Augusta blushing. "But is it not cold for a water excursion—on a Sunday too—is it quite the thing?"

"Oh, quite! One would not go in a common boat like the cits, but the yacht is quite warm, and so safe and elegant, you will be enchanted."

"I am that already, I fancy," replied Augusta evasively, at the same time determining to ascertain if any part of the family went to church, and if so, to go with them, rather than with the water party.

"Was there a great crowd at lady Dareall's last night?" asked colonel St. Orme of his daughter.

"As usual," replied she carelessly; "the house cast a light all over the square. It is certainly very bad taste to create such an overpowering glare.—George, have you heard that Jack Dareall is just married to a milliner girl?"

"The

"The devil he is! A pretty blow-up the old Jezebel will make! Egad, I pity the girl, be she who she may; she is too good for Jack."

"I always feared that young man would ruin himself," said the colonel, pompously; "he was beyond advice, and above reproof. Did his misconduct appear to affect his mother, or was she last night in her usual charming spirits?"

"I did not observe any difference, sir," replied Eleonora.

"Lady Dareall is too much a woman of intrigue to let her mortification be visible; she has learnt 'to smile in a rage, and look calm in a storm,' to perfection," said George.

The colonel was about to reply, when the door opened, and sir William Hargrave, lady Emilia de Torville, and half a dozen others, entered in high spirits, full of glee and frolic.

Augusta made her escape, and bent her steps towards Mrs. St. Orme's dressing room;

room ; the invalid was as before enveloped in shawls and eider-down, slowly supping her chocolate.

“ Good morning, my dear aunt,” said Augusta cheerfully, and taking her aunt’s thick white hand ; “ I came,” continued she with animation, “ to hope you were going to church, and to accompany you ; we always go at home, and the day will appear very long if I do not go.”

“ Go where, my dear ?”

“ To church, dear aunt—do you not usually go ?”

“ Oh, never—no, never. What should I do there ?” replied the half-sleeping aunt.

“ Do there ! why serve the God of heaven ; and his service is perfect liberty. Oh ! you know not the comfort you would find in a constant attendance at the house of prayer ; it would ‘ lay the rough paths of rugged nature even,’ and open in your breast a little heaven. To an invalid,” continued the warm-hearted girl, “ what so soothing—what so supporting, as true religion ?

ligion? It takes from misery its thorn, from pain its bitterness, and from sorrow its power to oppress." She ceased, and looking affectionately in her aunt's face, softly repeated—" Do be persuaded."

" But I have no sorrow *now*; I have forgotten it," said the invalid, again closing her half-opened eyes.

Lucinda sat by, dressing a doll.—" I never was at church in my life," said she; " I should very much like to go though, if Augusta would take me—a great many people do go."

" *Your* papa would not approve of it; Augusta's friends are Methodists, and *they* always go; but it is not the custom here, therefore you must not think of such nonsense.—Fanny, give me my drops—I wish to be left quiet," said Mrs. St. Orme, in a tone of almost displeasure.

Fanny gave the drops, and assisted her mistress to a couch. The lines of Cowper involuntarily rose to the lips of the indignant Augusta.

“ Satiate with food, *her* heavy eyelids close—  
Voluptuous minions fan *her* to repose ;  
Prone on the noonday couch *she* lolls in vain ;  
Delirious slumbers rack *her* maudlin brain.”

“ Alas ! poor human nature, under what a variety of disgusting images art thou seen when unsubdued by grace !” sighed she, as closing her dressing-room door she sat down to pursue her solitary devotions.

But even these were not long uninterrupted. Lucinda, gently tapping, begged admission, and quietly taking her seat by Augusta’s side, overlooked her book with apparent attention, until they were interrupted by the hasty, noisy entrance of Eleonora.—“ *Ne plus des préchments ni des prières,*” cried she, closing the books.

“ Augusta, make yourself beautiful, and prepare for conquest ; the carriages will be at the door in five minutes ; the yacht already waits—sails set, and streamers flying ; so be quick, my girl—be quick.”

Augusta hesitated. She knew not how to refuse, yet felt she was doing wrong to go,

go, and dreaded the keen lash of her cousin's satire if she manifested irresolution.

"Come, Augusta; why do you loiter here?" cried Eleonora impatiently.

"Why, my dear, I almost dread to go; you know my mother's hatred to water parties; besides, it is on a Sunday. I wish—"

"*You wish!*" interrupted Eleonora; "it is the employ of fools; but upon my word *I wish* you had a little common sense; your mother's hatred of *water parties*, and *Sunday*—absolutely it is *too* ridiculous! Pray, my dear, can you tell how many prayers your great-grandmother read before she went out hunting? for I have heard she was main religious, and a desperate Nimrod! But really, Augusta, joking apart, you will never recommend religion by all those ascetic airs and graces."

"Well, well, say no more; I shall be ready in ten minutes," cried Augusta. "But what becomes of Lucinda?"

"Oh,

“ Oh, she must remain with mamma,” returned her sister.

“ But she would enjoy going with us, and why not? Come, indulge me,” said Augusta coaxingly.

“ Well, you deserve some indulgence, and if taking Lucy be one, enjoy, in the name of all that is happy.” So saying, Eleonora flew off, and Lucinda, jumping with delight, ran to prepare herself for the excursion.

The day was fine—the party large and gay—the yacht commodious, and the scene a new one—yet Augusta could not be quite happy; her parents, she knew, would be miserable if they knew where she was; there was a sort of family prophecy that threatened Augusta with a watery death; and Mrs. St. Orme had constantly urged her not to venture on it. The prophecy had always been a subject of laughter; but Augusta could not help recollecting it now; yet the native gaiety of her disposition, the joyousness of her bounding heart, at

at times rose above conscience and fears, and full of life, spirits, and frolic, she enjoyed every moment, and was the admiration and envy of the party.

It was in the midst of one of these gay sallies, that, standing between her cousin George and De Montford on the gallery of the deck, Augusta's eye fell on Eleonora, who stood leaning pensively against the rail at the most distant part of the deck; her fine dark face, divested of every ray of animation or pleasure, spoke the language of deep and bitter feeling; an expression of mingled despair and horror gloomily lighted her eye of liquid fire; while her figure, robbed of its elasticity, was shrunk and trembling. At a little distance stood colonel St. Orme, apparently engaged with a book, but his penetrating eye rested on Eleonora, and a frown of the darkest kind curled his manly brow, while every feature expressed firm determination not unmixed with contempt. A glance was sufficient for Augusta. Following the impulsive

pulse of her feelings, she suddenly exclaimed—"Good Heavens! what ails Eleonora, and the colonel too!—what has happened?" and quick as lightning she would have flown to them; but George gently withheld her.—"Stay, my dear Augusta," cried he, "Elly has forgotten herself; but do not for the world notice it to her. She will soon recover, and after all it is nothing."

"God of justice, and do you call it nothing to sacrifice such a girl!" ejaculated De Montford.

"Pardon me, De Montford, you *know* what I think," said George emphatically.

"She never was like this in the country, as you call a large commercial city," observed Augusta.

"Oh no," said De Montford; "the cause existed not there. I thought, perhaps I hoped, she would never return. Do you see yon white house, half hid by trees?"

"I do," replied Augusta; "what a lovely spot! Sure if happiness be found

on

on earth, it may be met with there; all the imagination can paint of sweet and heavenly, seems there to have fixed its home!"

"And yet," replied De Montford, with a sad smile, "it was the sight of that sweet spot, connected with the idea of making it her home, that overthrew poor Eleonora's almost invincible vivacity, so different are your views."

"I know not that," returned Augusta; "the country would not affright Eleonora, nor yonder lovely spot do ought but delight her, if engaged with those she loves. But I am not mistaken—I know I am not; that base bloated reptile, 'loathsome as death, corrupted as the grave'—that odious baronet, must be the price of the house and yacht; and rather than wed him, De Montford, I would wed my grave! or, what is still worse, poverty and affliction! A life of celibacy and labour might be borne without repining; but life united with vice, and degraded by voluptuousness,

ness, from it, death, honest slavery, poverty, age—any thing, not involving immortality, would be a refuge."

"Does Eleonora know your sentiments?" asked De Montford, with a hurried eye.

"She cannot help it," replied Augusta; but more was prevented by the voyage being terminated.

George, who had disappeared at the commencement of their conversation, came towards them, with Eleonora in high spirits.—"Safely here then, Augusta," cried she, "although it is *Sunday*."

De Montford took her hand with brotherly kindness.—"I have scarce spoken to you to-day," said he. "Will you permit me to land you on shore?"

"Oh, certainly, if George can put up with Augusta."

"And if he cannot, there are many here who can," replied Augusta laughing; but George seemed well satisfied, and the whole

whole party quickly disembarked at the bottom of sir William's garden.

Every eye was directed towards Eleonora, and a sort of halt made, that she might precede the party, but in seeming unconsciousness she clung closely to De Montford's arm, who, understanding the scene, turned short round, and stood admiring the opposite side of the Thames.

Sir William looked after them an instant; then taking the hand of Amelia—“Miss St. Orme being engaged,” said he, “allow me the honour of conducting you, my pretty Amelia, and installing you, *pro tempore*, mistress of Hargrave Lodge.”

“To all but the last I agree,” returned Amelia; “but not for an instant will I ever usurp the rights of another.”

A splendid collation awaited them, and sir William shone in the character of a host. Several allusions were made to the time when Eleonora would preside there; but deaf or senseless, she was totally inattentive and unconcerned during the conversation,

versation, and took but little notice of the house, the grounds, or its master.

Lady Emilia, leaning on the arm of the colonel, viewed her with “malicious eye askance,” and suddenly stopping before a panel, from whence a picture had recently been removed.—“Why is this empty, sir William?” asked she.

“It waits for the portrait of lady Hargrave,” replied the baronet.

“Eleonora,” cried lady Emilia, “come hither this moment—I want you.”

Thus called, and unconscious of what had passed, Eleonora came smiling forward.

“Here, Elly,” cried she, “sir William says this panel is waiting for your likeness—that it is to be put there as lady Hargrave. Now do tell me who is to do it?”

With a laugh of scornful haughty contempt Eleonora replied—“Ask your friend sir William; I know nothing about it; then raising her eye-glass to a flattering portrait of the baronet, she exclaimed—“Merciful Powers, what a fright! I wonder who it

can

can be done for. Faugh! it is almost as bad as life!"

"I wish to my heart sir William would have you, lady Emilia—you would then let Miss St. Orme rest in peace, perhaps, and you would be a delightful match for him," said Miss Cooper, with some asperity.

"No, two of a trade can never agree; that won't hit at all: lady Emilia must go farther, and perhaps fare worse, than among us," rejoined De Montford, playfully.

"How peculiarly happy you are this morning, De Montford, in tacking together old saws, to say nothing of your politeness!" said lady Emilia sneeringly.

"The test of true politeness is to be able to conform to one's company without effort, is it not?" asked De Montford, as turning rapidly from her he seized the hand of Eleonora, exclaiming—"Come, you whose taste is unequalled, and give me your opinion of that equipage coming up the lawn."

“ It is elegant—only *too* rich and elegant,” replied Eleonora, with almost a sigh, as her brother Henry drove a beautiful open carriage, drawn by four handsome grey horses, glittering in brass and varnish, rapidly up the broad coachway.

“ Nay, do not sigh, my dear Eleonora—any thing but sighs and tears from you ; those I cannot bear : if you are not happy, hide it from me, or I shall throw off all restraint ; but that carriage contains no cause of vexation—it is not your brother’s. Austin Holdworthy, the rich banker’s son, has just started it—did you not see him in it ?”

“ No, I saw only Henry and the carriage—and at the moment felt only the imprudence of it ; but that was folly.—What have I to do with thought? sons of care, ’twas made for you,” returned Eleonora, with her usual sparkling thoughtlessness.

Augusta, from her approximation to the parties, could not help hearing what passed ;

passed ; she looked earnestly at De Montford, as Eleonora, looking archly at her, whispered—“ Now, my good girl, you are at fault again—it is a language you do not understand.”

“ I fear,” replied Augusta, “ I can comprehend it but too well.”

“ Ay, ay, child, it is easily learnt,” returned she, in a bitter low tone—“ it is the language of the world ; all speak it—all feel it ; differently, it is true—but still the language is the same : and here comes another page of its grammar for your study—one you will not study unmoved.—How do, Henry ?” continued she, starting off in the liveliest tone imaginable—“ how do, my boy ? why it is an age since I saw you ! handsomer than ever I declare.”

“ Ay, Elly, girl, is it you ! noisy as ever, I hear ! 'pon honour I am starving ; your inamorato invited me here to dinner ; have you any thing of the sort in the house ? my friend Austin and myself

shall inevitably die of starvation, unless speedily supplied," drawled the youth.

"Heavens, what an irreparable loss to society!" cried Eleonora — "dinner! ay, all the houses, farms, and shops, between this and Temple-bar, shall be put in requisition for you instantly, to prevent such a dire calamity as you threaten as with!"

"The best part of the provision though will be found on the other side Temple-bar," cried a short, red-faced man, who came bustling up to Austin Holdworthy — "won't it, my young friend?"

"Possibly, sir, but positively cannot tell," simpered the beau, drawing off from Mr. Higgs as from a most offensive object.

"*Cannot tell!*" roared Higgs — "what the devil, have you no taste then? You that have dined the other side Temple-bar four days in a week ever since you left the Bluecoat-school—and which side all the seven years you were there, I wonder!"

wonder ! *Cannot tell !* that is a good one ; Lord ! Lord ! if my old friend Hold-worthy heard that, why he would strike thee out of his will, boy—and to pot then go the four greys, dandy carriage and all ; ha ! ha ! ha !”

The rising colour and bent eyebrows of the insulted beau threatened a storm, which was happily allayed by dinner being announced, to which all repaired, as if anxious, with one accord, to do honour to the liberality of their host. Frolic, fun, and hilarity, seemed the order of the day ; every one laughed, talked, and cracked a joke, unrestrained by reflection—but careful not to exceed the bounds of good breeding, though fashionably free and easy.

Augusta entered into the spirit of the party with all her native gaiety, totally forgetful of all the sage precepts of her friends, the sober habits of her parents, the Sabbath decorum observed in the home of her youth, and the utter horror with which she would have contemplated such

a desecration of a sacred day, but one week before. But this forgetfulness could not last long ; Augusta was the child rather of severity than indulgence, accustomed to the task of self-examination, to reflection, and to action. Her best instructor had been observation ; from this she had drawn many a lesson, and much useful information : thus the habit of comparing events, persons, and circumstances, was become almost a part of herself—though since her residence in London, the continued opposition of persons and things which had met her view, the novelty of the life she led and saw others lead, the astounding variety of scenes that passed before her eyes, and all the bewildering pomp and vanity of her immediate associates, had distracted her mind, and unfitted her for sober, steady reflection ; thus unwarily drawing her into a participation of follies her undivided reason would have most decidedly condemned.

Lady Emilia and captain St. Orme sung  
duets,

duets, as Eleonora played. Augusta was passionately fond of music, and wrapt in admiration of “ the concord of sweet sounds,” stood with every faculty enveloped in that of listening. Mrs. Mansell, a young widow of the party, and Austin Holdworthy, followed ; but as Mr. Higgs said the Bluecoat-school and Finsbury-square were bad places for learning music, so they soon came to a finale—and Amelia St. Orme was loudly clamoured for.

Amelia, with her usual sweet smile, came forward.—“ Henry de Montford, you will accompany me,” said she, in a beseeching voice. De Montford complied, and a harp being pronounced by lady Emilia the most suitable instrument for Amelia’s voice, a very excellent one was drawn to the centre of the room, on which Amelia accompanied herself. Duets, trios, and solos followed, and again Augusta trod enchanted ground—it was science, harmony, sweetness, perfection.

“ Amelia and De Montford are created

for each other," cried Augusta, as they withdrew from the instrument; " never were tones so rich or so sweetly blended as theirs—they are indeed a lovely couple."

" They are," replied Miss Cooper, who stood by—" but there I fear it will end; De Montford's family are too noble and too poor to permit his taking a wife without fortune or influence, or he had long ago taken Eleonora, though Amelia is much better suited to him; you know, I suppose, what a hatred his uncle bears to the colonel and his family?"

" No, I know nothing about it," returned Augusta.

" It is no secret," resumed Miss Cooper; " George St. Orme and Alicia de Montford were fondly—madly attached to each other for a long, long time. George was then in the army, and would have risen honourably, but for the rancour of lord Belcour. Alicia will have a tolerable good fortune, independent of him, at twenty-four—but until then she is quite dependent

ent on her uncle. George, however, was willing to do the best he could, and they were to live here on his commission until she got her property. Lord Belcour is a great friend of general Bernard, and has some old prejudice against colonel St. Orme—so that he always opposed George. The day, however, was fixed for their marriage, and never were people so happy ; wedding finery was bought, and the morning arrived. George, at an early hour, fortunately for the family, hastened to St. James's-square, to give some preliminary direction, when lo and behold ! he found lord Belcour's house shut up, and not a soul but a deaf old woman in it. Nothing could exceed his rage ; lord Belcour was the colonel of his regiment—of course easily found ; but he stubbornly refused to give any account of Alicia—only telling George, in the most taunting manner, that his niece should never taint her noble blood, by mingling it with pride and poverty, unsupported by rank. *Several*

veral weeks passed on, and George found he had only to quit his regiment voluntarily, or by remaining a short time, to be expelled—so numerous were his enemies and his insults : he therefore sold out, and sick of every thing, purchased a commission one step lower in another regiment, and presented to his coxcomb brother—who, afraid of fighting, I fancy, has effected an exchange into the Guards, where his handsome person will be protected : but I must tell you the worst part of the story. Two months after poor George's disappointment, he received, through the medium of Henry de Montford, a letter from Alicia, imploring his pardon and forgiveness for a fault not her own—and entreating him to forget her as *his* Alicia ; and should they ever meet, to meet her under any circumstances as a friend, and kindly. George had nothing to forgive, for he had never been angry with her—and he is too good to treat any one unkindly—better than Alicia—for the papers were immediately

diately after filled with the marriage, beauty, splendour, and I don't know what, of the *countess of Balferron*! You will see her, for they constantly visit formally, but George prudently refuses more."

"And do they meet lord Belcour?" asked Augusta.

"In large parties, but never at dinner; he has, however, a malignant eye on them, and would rather see Henry a corpse than the husband of a St. Orme."

"Is Henry dependent on him?"

"Entirely so—and I fancy finds him liberal enough; but no persuasions of De Montford could ever induce his uncle to render him independent, or allow him to enter the army or navy. There is no doubt that lord Belcour's reason for this is a fear of Henry marrying against his will, who being heir to his lordship's titles and estates, would perhaps be likely to choose for himself; but you see, Augusta, after all this, there is no chance for poor Amelia."

Augusta's eyes were suffused in tears; she acknowledged there was no hope for Amelia: she began also to suspect there was a secret grief under Eleonora's gay exterior, that rancoured deeply in a proud heart. She also fancied a preference for George discovered itself under Miss Cooper's compassionate esteem for his character and sufferings.—“ Does your father think as highly of George St. Orme as yourself?” asked Augusta.

“ He does indeed,” returned Miss Cooper; “ in fact, it is more on his account than any thing else, he keeps me in Hanover-square, unwilling to press matters while there is the slightest hope of the colonel being able to settle his affairs, particularly on account of his family. Don't think me bold or presuming, Miss Augusta, but there are persons, my own mamma among the number, who think the wisest thing that can be done, is to make up a match between George, and myself; but I assure you I never thought

of it, though George is a young man any one may love; but the difference between Alicia and myself is greater than poor George will ever get over; so matters must rest as they are, I believe." Further conversation was prevented by the object of it coming forward to solicit Augusta to sing.

" You will excuse me," replied Augusta, " I know, when I tell you that I have no more knowledge of singing, as a science, than of Arabic, and should only shock the refined ears of my audience."

" Oh, nonsense, Augusta, I thought *you* were above affectation, and Eleonora declares you sing sweetly."

" So a thousand other indulgent friends have declared, and so I have sometimes thought; but, George, you shall judge for yourself, at any time when we are at home without company, or if you and Eleonora will visit me in my dressing-room," replied Augusta.

But George was dissatisfied, and called in

in the aid of Eleonora, Henry, Miss Cooper, De Montford, and several others, to prevail on Augusta to sing ; and it was now she began to pay the penalty due to her indecision ; to persist in her ignorance of the science as an excuse, in opposition to all that was said, was impossible ; and how could she, after joining in the follies of the day, dare to offer the reason that really prevented her ? it would only be treated with contempt, and draw on her head, what she must have acknowledged to be well merited, ridicule ; yet, feeling that she had already done wrong, not all the flattery and persuasion of the gentlemen, the sneers of the ladies, nor the ironical wit of Eleonora, could induce Augusta to add one iota more to the amount of her improprieties. Finding her inflexible, and the evening far advanced, a return to town was proposed. Augusta recollected her mother, and shrunk in dismay from the thought of returning by water ; but what was to be done—one only carriage

riage was there among them, and that belonged to a total stranger. Henry St. Orme pressed her acceptance of a seat in it, declaring his preference of the water party. For an instant Augusta hesitated, but catching the expression of lady Emilia's countenance, declined decidedly. She had no fear, nor did she see any impropriety, in going alone in a hired chaise—but the ridicule and sarcasm hinting at such a thing would draw down on her, was quite insupportable, unless she could get some other female to prefer a carriage; in this hope she applied to her cousins Amelia and Lucinda, but both declared in favour of the water—and no one else breathing a fear, Augusta boldly placing herself under the care of George St. Orme, and supported on the other side by captain Greaves, walked to the yacht, and sprung on board, determined to subdue her fears. The moon, although at the full, was hidden behind dark heavy clouds, from which lightning occasionally gleamed in

in frightful brilliance—and the distant roll of thunder was soon distinctly perceptible to the quick ear of Augusta, who alone of the party appeared to entertain any fear, and who struggled hard to preserve her tranquillity; but the storm continued to increase—the wind blew a hurricane; the thunder, lightning, and rain, were tremendous; and their little bark, tossed by the fury of the elements, was every instant threatened with destruction, while the now terrified females clung in wild affright to their protectors, and by their alarm added to the horrors of the appalling scene.

It was now that Augusta felt the value of a religious education, and that the strength of her well-regulated mind shewed itself to good purpose. She was fully persuaded that the last hours of her life were arrived, and that a watery grave was prepared for her: she felt too how improperly her day had been spent, and bitterly wept the shock her poor mother would receive, and the disgrace entailed on her

own

own name.—“Had my death,” thought she, “been that of a Christian, then would my memory have been embalmed in the hearts of my fond friends; now my name will cover with a blush the noble forehead of my father, and suffuse my mother’s eyes in tears of pity; while to others I shall serve to ‘*point a moral, or adorn a tale.*’ But in the eyes of God how shall I appear?” the question drew her on, her bent knees, and there for several hours, while the storm raged furiously, and the contending elements tossed their now shattered bark at will—while the females screamed, fainted, and raved, preventing by their terrors those exertions which every man on board felt called on to make, for the preservation of his own life and that of the helpless beings around—there was Augusta to be seen; but not a word, a complaint, or a tear, did she address to mortal being: quiet, immovable, firmly relying on Divine assistance, either in life or in her dying moments, she

scarcely

scarcely heard the storm, and was spared from the distress around her.

After some hours the wind died away, and with incredible difficulty and danger the shattered yacht gained a spot where it could put its half-dead cargo on shore just at sunrise.

Drenched with wet, and shivering with cold, Augusta once more reached her warm apartments, and there poured out the ardent acknowledgments of her grateful heart before that beneficent Being, who had thus wonderfully preserved her from sudden and awful death.

## CHAPTER VI.

I see a strange confession in thine eye :  
Thou shak'st thy head ; and hold'st it fear or sin  
To speak a truth. SHAKESPEARE.

AUGUSTA had been two months in London, and was become in some degree reconciled to the mysterious manner in which her uncle's house was conducted, and felt less shocked than she had done on her first coming at hearing him called *poor*, because from hearing the same term applied to noblemen, and families living in the highest style, she learned to consider it as a comparative term, applied to those who were less rich than some few, whose wealth she had heard estimated at millions. She sometimes recollected the conversation with Clara Cooper at Richmond, but not understanding it, soon dismissed

the

the subject from her thoughts. Indeed, during this busy period, in which so much novelty was crowded, Augusta had found but little time for thinking; nothing less than the inveterate habit of reflection and comparison she had contracted in the country could have enabled her to find any moment sufficiently unoccupied. Miss Bernard was married; and as the honourable Mrs. Beauchamp, showered down her favours on *her dear Augusta*, but still stood very much aloof from colonel St. Orme and family, and consequently did not see half so much of the high-minded Augusta as she wished to do.

Hitherto Eleonora, with the most perfect ease and decision, had declared she did not *choose* Lucinda to go to school yet; thus perpetually contradicting lady Emilia, whose will with every other part of the family was law, but who on no occasion ever opposed the independent, self-willed Eleonora.

Augusta, who, through the provident care

care of her good mother, had not been left another Sabbath to cater for herself, but constantly made one of her father's friend, Mr. Preston's family, from Saturday until Monday, or at least from an early hour on Sunday, returned from thence just as Eleonora, accompanied by sir William Hargrave, drove up to the door in George St. Orme's stylish phæton, drawn by four ponies.

Augusta started on entering the hall to see there several strange, rude-looking men, who scarcely deigned to move out of her way, though standing immediately between the door and the stairs.

Eleonora's colour changed ; but scarcely glancing that way, she ran hastily on, playfully pushing Augusta before her. There was scarcely time to dress for dinner, and the dinner-table was as usual surrounded by a large and gay company, who, to judge by their wit and mirth, knew not care even by name.

Colonel St. Orme was in high spirits,

more

more than usually beneficent and dignified, and most carefully attentive to his niece and eldest daughter.

There was a lurking mischief in Eleonora's dark eye, that occasionally peeped out, but she chatted and laughed as gay as usual.

"Who do you think left cards for Miss and Miss Augusta St. Orme this morning?" asked George.

"I have no idea," replied Augusta: "nobody, I dare say, worth thinking of."

"The honourable Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp are exceedingly obliged to you," said Eleonora: "I however feel proud in having triumphed over prejudice, and brought the first overtures from the high and lofty house of Beauchamp: you will have no objection, Augusta, to return the call to-morrow?"

"Certainly not; on the contrary, I shall be happy thus to return the pretty Olivia's three visits at Mrs. Preston's," replied Augusta.

A great

A great deal was said respecting the Bernard and Beauchamp family; colonel St. Orme as usual treating the Bernards with the most ineffable contempt—"They have however," added he, "improved the native poverty of their stock by this marriage, and I shall be most happy in sending my daughter and niece in my own carriage, attended as the females of the St. Orme family ought to be, to return the visit of this *parvenue* bride."

"Will you call on the countess Balfern, Eleonora?" asked captain Greaves; "she has been in town several days."

Augusta stole a glance at her cousin; he was pale, but composed, and did not seem to hear the captain.

Eleonora returned some careless reply; and without affording the captain an opportunity of continuing the subject, occupied the general attention until she thought proper to retire; when giving Mrs. St. Orme the usual signal, that lady mechanically rose, and moved towards the draw-  
ing-

ing-room, accompanied by the same plain-looking gentleman Augusta had frequently met, and who she now knew as Mr. Cooper.

The evening passed off as usual, only that Augusta fancied captain Greaves more attentive, and more familiar in his attentions to her, than he had ever before been; there was also an expression in Mr. Cooper's eye, which she frequently observed intently fixed on her, that startled and somewhat puzzled her; it was severe, yet pitying, inquiring, and doubtful. Augusta at first shrunk from his glance, but quickly recovering her usual self-possession, she felt assured that in no possible way could she have given him offence, and resolved to inquire if his observation meant any thing particular.

A great proportion of the company were engaged in cards. Augusta did not play: she observed that at her uncle's, and at many other houses, cards were played not as an amusement, but as a business, and

and that sums which to her appeared immense, were lost and won every night: against such a procedure, reason, religion, and prudence spoke, and no persuasion or raillery could induce Augusta to make one at such a board.

On this evening captain Greaves had declined playing, and sat or walked by the side of Augusta until she was heartily wearied of him, and meditating a retreat to her own room, when lady Emilia relieved her, by almost forcing the reluctant captain to make one at a table she was then forming.

George St. Orme and Miss Cooper immediately joined her.—“Congratulate me, my dear Augusta, in escaping the fangs of that harpy, Mrs. Molesworth, with the loss of two guineas only!” cried George.

“Two guineas *only!*” exclaimed Augusta: “what would you do with us, George? My father—nay, all the family of us, never lost two guineas at cards since we were born! I am exceedingly asto-

nished at Eleonora! while with us, she passed many, many long evenings, without seeing a card; and when she did play, it was speculation at twopence a dozen, or whist at sixpence a game; yet she was gay, and, it seems to me, happier than she has been at home."

"No doubt she was happier," returned George; "she has unbounded spirits, and an inexhaustible fund of wit and gaiety, that would enliven a desert; but here, poor girl! she has so many contending feelings, and such continual drains on her animal spirits and courage, that I sometimes fear she will sink into a gambling virago."

"I wish Mrs. St. Orme would play a little, it would enliven her," said Clara, compassionately.

"Your mother was not always so quiet, I think," said Augusta; "I used to hear many excellent anecdotes of her, and much said in her praise by my own mamma."

"I dare say you have, and deservedly," replied George, his fine eyes kindling; "I remember

remember my mother all that female should be—tender, kind, warm-hearted, and endearing. A soldier's wife has much to endure, but that did not hurt my mother: change of clime perhaps did in some degree; but it was troubles, purely domestic sorrows, she could not, would not reveal, that sunk and oppressed her thus. How many bitter tears has she shed on my bosom! in fact, she has wept herself blind, and stupified herself with laudanum. She does not feel now, and I hope never will again."

Augusta could not speak; her eyes and heart were full.

Clara asked George if Amelia was not very like her mother in early life?

"She is," replied he; "but my mother was educated very differently, consequently possessed more vivacity and feeling than Amelia. She married early too, and bestowed a warm, full, and tender heart on my father. Amelia has never seen, and could not imagine an attachment of

that pure, disinterested kind. It is wonderful how that master passion alters the character. Poor Amelia! she has never loved, or been loved yet, beyond that sort of moral instinct which cats feel for kittens, and kittens for their mothers."

"Apropos of love," interrupted Clara; "I came to talk to Augusta about her lover, and here we are moralizing on events beyond our control.—I hope, Augusta, the noble captain has made some progress this evening; he laid siege most manfully; you cannot surely be insensible to his perfections?"

"Oh, not at all!" replied Augusta, forcing a laugh; "perfections such as his will make themselves manifest."

"But joking apart, Augusta, do you really think that if you made the effort, you could love him sufficiently to become his wife?" asked George: "he is of a good family, very rich, and certainly free and good-natured; and very little love will

will do on the lady's side, you know, now-a-days."

"No, George, it will never do; hitherto, I may say with Ossian, 'I live in a world of my own;' and perhaps such may be my destiny: but if I do marry, it must be where all the enthusiasm of my nature can repose with perfect confidence of full, impassioned return—where I can love with a never-dying ardour, and feel proud of my devotion! you smile, but I cannot help it—captain Greaves is safe for me."

Mr. Cooper stood before her.—"Very pretty indeed!" said he, smiling, and patting her cheek; "but, my dear girl, they are not wear and tear sentiments; and beside that, you may as well talk Greek to one-half of the world—you would be as well understood; a good settlement is all girls think of, and that the captain could give you."

"You too, Mr. Cooper, harping on the same chord!" exclaimed Augusta, in surprise. "Now do you know it is one the

captain has never struck for my amusement or edification ; but if he did, it would be the same ; my sentiments are honest, and I have seen such abide the wear and tear of misfortune unimpaired ; and for the world you speak of, I am not, nor ever shall be, of it."

The breaking-up of some of the card-tables put an end to the conversation. A deeper shade than usual had stolen over the fine features of George, and Augusta fancied his voice tremulous, as he bid her good night, and disappeared through a side door.

Augusta was quietly seated in her dressing-room, her tearful eyes fixed on the pale full moon, riding in cloudless majesty, and her thoughts with the dear friends and companions of her infancy—all she had once fancied faults and unkindness forgotten—every virtue magnified to perfection—every look and word of kindness glowing fresh and warm in her remembrance : from this tearful, happy trance

trance she was aroused by the entrance of Eleonora.

“What,” cried Eleonora, “in tears! sadly and silently watching the lovers’ friend, pale Luna? are those tears shed for the almost-as-pale Edwin, of sighing memory? the dark-eyed Glossit, of anti-Christian memory? or—or—or—Augusta, be honest—any favoured swain of more recent acquaintance?”

“Not the latter, rest assured,” replied Augusta, firmly; “as yet I have not seen the man in London who could rival either of the two you spoke of: your brother George is the most rational being I have seen; and, by the bye, Eleonora, do you not think Clara Cooper is aware of his virtues?”

“Oh, Clara,” returned she, carelessly, “has for the last twelvemonth been sighing, and singing—

‘And why may I not love Johnny?

‘And why may not Johnny love me?

‘And why may I not love Johnny

As well as another body?’

and love Johnny she may, if she will, but Johnny will not love her, though he says she dresses better, and is much improved, since you came. Somehow or other, Augusta, you are a monstrous favourite with the Cooper set; it is a pity they have no son for you: I do verily believe they admire you for your majestic height and pride, for old dame Cooper declared, as how you looked wastly more like a real lady than any von else in the room, though you warn't half so much dressed as some she could name: however, for all her vulgarity, I heartily wish George would give his hand and his seared heart too, if he can, to Clara—it is a consummation devoutly to be wished."

"And is there no hope of it?"

"No, Augusta, not the most remote; I must be the first victim; all the others will follow in one way or another; but I—I must lead the way; with a heart devoted to one man, loving him to idolatry, I must give my hand to a loathsome miscreant,

creant, that I abhor, detest, abominate, with all the powers of a maddened spirit, and that at nineteen!" A laugh of demoniacal frenzy followed this declaration.

Augusta wept bitterly.—"But why," cried she—"why *must* you, dear Eleonora, marry a man you hate? surely there is no imperative necessity for it?"

"I will tell you why," returned Eleonora, solemnly—"to keep up this artificial state of things a little longer, to lengthen the farce another scene: I never angled but for one man in my life," continued she, relapsing into a strain of bitter gaiety, "and there you circumvented me; yet I love you dearly; but if Glossit would have married me, I could have driven gaily on, blessed poor Henry, and not have disliked my husband; but the fates have spun the yarn, and wove the woof of my destiny. I cannot weep like you, but I can rave; however I will not; the world shall never point a finger at me; the honour of the man I love and the man I hate

shall be equally respected by me, because I sacrifice too much for my position in society, to risk it lightly : the bubble reputation is dearer than life to this proud heart."

"Keep that resolution," replied the weeping Augusta, "and you cannot be quite miserable: it is vice alone, vice of our own seeking, that brings with it true misery. Alas ! how often have I envied your family their independence, without knowing what I did!"

"Independence !" cried Eleonora—"less than a bubble ! the only independence dwells in the mind, and there I enjoy it. '*My resolution is placed—I have nothing of woman in me.*' I came here, my dear, to try your independence—to prepare you for a trial; but I will not—rest in peace—I will not distract thy slumbers."

"Fear me not, Eleonora; whatever you have to reveal, I shall be equal to it; I wish your bosom were as little torn as mine, and your sorrows as few."

"Vain

“Vain wish—the morrow perhaps may shew you why, but I cannot breathe. Here—here it lies, *a lump of clay by day, and in my short, distracted, nightly slumbers, the hag that rides my dreams!* but avaunt reflection! the die is cast! my innocent, godly cousin, good night! I promised to shew you the world—this is one of its pages; to-morrow you shall see another, in the person of the countess Balferron, as good and as fair as Augusta—as miserable and as gay as Eleonora.” So saying, she kissed her cousin’s pale wet cheek, and withdrew; and Augusta retired to her bed of down, wondering what Eleonora alluded to, and fully determined to preserve her independence and right of refusal, should a vision that now floated in her brain attain a form and substance; and it is probable, that under that splendid roof there were but few individuals who enjoyed a night of such calm repose.

Colonel St. Orme was one among many who had suffered exceedingly from the

events of the American war, but the extent of his losses were not generally known; nor was it generally known that private pique and individual favour had prevented his promotion in the army, and raised to the rank of general the man whom the generous St. Orme had taken from the drum-head. But so it was; yet while writhing under unmerited neglect and suffering, from the tardiness with which his pecuniary claims were allowed, as well as from the extent of losses which government refused to recognise, he trusted to the generosity of those with whom he had to deal, and kept up a style of living more suited to his claims and former prospects, than to his present income: this naturally produced difficulties; and the means resorted to to raise money tended but to increase those difficulties eventually.

Too proud to acknowledge himself aggrieved or embarrassed, colonel St. Orme had carefully hidden, even from his own children, every cause of uneasiness, every mark

mark of neglect from superior powers, and the many tokens of disrespect that constantly annoyed him; but from his wife it was impossible to conceal any thing, nor did he attempt it. Intimately acquainted with all his affairs, and deeply interested in them, the tender, gentle, affectionate Amelia saw ruin advancing with rapid strides, and urged, with all the powers of her gentle nature, the necessity of retrenchment; at the same time that she shrank with horror from the idea of curtailing her children's comforts or indulgences: this want of consistency drew on her the whole weight of her husband's irony and contempt, who having no other on whom he could exhaust the bitter feelings not natural to him, but which arose out of circumstances, gave way to the most violent paroxysms of rage before her, which burnt the stronger from having been long pent up.

Before this whirlwind the little courage Mrs. St. Orme possessed was scared in wild affright.

affright. She gradually sunk under the complicated troubles that weighed her down, until the ascendancy of lady Emilia de Torville came like the breath of the sirocco, to dry up every feeling, and wither under its baleful influence all that remained of energy, mind, or hope. The hapless Amelia sunk into a dreamy state of listless inaction: almost stupefied by laudanum, and grown immensely large, every movement was troublesome; her family were left to themselves; and in a short time the once delightful mistress of the house was forgotten, or only remembered as a useless being.

Still the colonel's difficulties increased. Lady Emilia and captain Greaves contrived to draw around him a worthless set, and introduce high play among the domestic circle: this, of course, did not improve either his finances or his reputation, which began fast to sink. Hence the many affronts that at times almost maddened the high-minded Eleonora, whose

whose keen wit and biting satire, fearless as it was severe, created for her a host of enemies, and kept at distance those who sincerely pitied, and would willingly have assisted her.

George was amiable and rational, but even he knew not how to keep within bounds, where money was the question ; yet Mr. Cooper would willingly have given him his daughter, who was kept in Hanover-square as a sort of guard over the property, on which Mr. Cooper had a claim of five thousand pounds ; this, with an additional ten, he would cheerfully have given with his daughter to George ; but George could not forget the elegant, tender object of his first affections so much, as to replace her by the good-hearted, vulgar daughter of his wine-merchant. — “ No,” said he to Augusta, “ I could do without wine, or make any sacrifice to pay the five thousand pounds, except the one required ; but to sacrifice taste, sentiment, and

and affection, and to barter independence for a maintenance, is too much!"

It is however a query whether George would have been equal to a sacrifice of any kind, had it come to the point. We are all creatures of habit and education, and both habit and education with George spoke only of indulgence.

While lady Emilia and captain Greaves kept the colonel in their power by gambling, sir Edward Hargrave, a worn-out disgusting debauchee, advanced at various times considerable sums to release him from difficulties, for which he took bonds; but as Eleonora opened into beauty, and became renowned as a sparkler, the baronet turned his eyes on her; and well aware that any dishonourable proposal would be deeply resented by all the proud family, he screwed up his courage to the pitch, and fairly offered himself and large property.

Had it fortunately happened that Eleonora's heart had known no prepossession, it

it is possible that vanity would have easily overcome repugnance ; but Eleonora loved and was beloved by an honourable, virtuous man. Such a declaration had never passed either of their lips, but their hearts were mutually understood ; insurmountable obstacles opposed their union, and sealed their lips ; yet Eleonora's heart's secret rendered vice and the baronet more odious, and determined her on trying distance as a specific, hence her visit to the west.

“ You are going,” said her father, “ to make a foolish trial, Eleonora ; in my brother's house you will meet only saintly ministers and calculating merchants, with vulgar wives and daughters ; from such you can derive nothing but amusement : most certainly you will never find there an establishment ; here a splendid one is offered you. You dislike the man, and I, Eleonora, dislike a *gaol* ! but unless you take one, I must have the other ; three months is the most distant period it can be

be put off: however, I do not urge you—you love Henry de Montford—‘as well love some bright peculiar star, and hope to win it:’ have we not borne insults enough for the proud set? marry the baronet, and look down on them—save your family from ruin, and be happy; or persist in refusing, see your father in gaol, your mother in a poor-house, your enemies grinning at you, and—and the devil with us all!’

Such was the parting interview between Eleonora and her father. She departed for Devonshire; and there, could she have succeeded in winning Glossit, would have deemed herself most fortunate; as it was, she resolved on taking Augusta back with her, not only to shew her a page in life’s book, stained with vices hitherto unknown to Augusta, but to secure a friend for herself, and probably to draw an object after them for whom she had a great inclination.

Eleonora, at the expiration of three months,

months, returned, and found her father more deeply entangled than ever: blindly devoted to lady Emilia, she directed every movement in the family, and was in fact the head of the house. But before Eleonora this female Machiavel cowered; there was a fire and depth in her dark expressive eye, under which her ladyship absolutely withered.

Captain Greaves was added to the number of those who held claims on the person and personal property of the colonel, and various were the duns who made his morning levee, without at all discomposing the regularity of the establishment, or in any way encroaching on the enjoyments of the drawing-room; but this was fast drawing to an end, and it was necessary that some alteration should speedily be made.

## CHAPTER VII.

This man's brow, like to a title-leaf,  
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.

SHAKESPEARE.

A FEW hours' sound repose renovated the exhausted spirits of Augusta, restrung her nerves, and brought back all the joyous images of "youth's fair morning," clothed the present in smiles, and decked futurity in the gayest colouring of young imagination.

"Are not you half-starved, Miss?" asked Martin, as she came to offer her services.

"I am ready for my breakfast indeed, Martin," replied Augusta; "it is so much beyond the usual time, that not seeing you, nor hearing any bell, I began to fancy

my

my watch played me false, and pointed to a wrong hour."

" I dare say you did, Miss ; but your watch is quite right, only we have had a bit of a hubbubble here this morning ; them there men as you see in the hall yesterday, they brought in an execution."

" A what, Martin ?"

" Law, Miss ! how frightened you do look ! and so pale ! why an execution is no great matter ; there ain't many gentlemen's houses in London but what get them now and then : to be sure they do come here oftener than they used to. I have lived with the colonel, Miss, ever since Miss Lucinda was born, and brought her to England in my arms. Ah ! I wish we had never seen Europe ! there was none of those things in America ; and before my poor mistress got there, I have heard her say, she never knew a trouble, for all she travelled all over the world with my master ; and a better gentleman and lady never lived—no, nor a better family ; yet

yet for all that, these insolent fellows that come in yesterday insisted on taking an inventory of all the furniture this morning, and talked about a sale, and I don't know what; and there is Mr. Cooper so glumpy, and the colonel he is *such* a gentleman—there is he, ordering coffee and chocolate, and telling them he shall pay them out in a day or two, and begging they will go into the servants' hall, and be comfortable; that's what they used always to do; but these seem to be a different sort. So you see, Miss, that is what engaged us all, and kept breakfast so late."

Martin might have talked on longer without interruption, Augusta was shocked beyond the power of speech, and did not hear half her loquacious attendant said, till roused by—" If you please, Miss, we will put your writing-desk, and dressing-box, and them things, into this cupboard, for the men wants to come into the sleeping-rooms—unmannerly brutes!"

Without understanding exactly what  
was

was meant by an execution being put into a house, Augusta was aware that it betokened distress or ruin, and such an event was accompanied in her mind with every external mark of grief, and a thousand nameless images of wo.—“ My poor aunt, what will be done when she knows it!” exclaimed Augusta, casting about in her own mind at the same instant how far her father could be useful, and rejoicing in the thought that she could offer an asylum to her aunt and cousins, until things were arranged.

From such a dream Martin quickly awoke her—“ Lord bless ye, Miss!” replied that experienced damsel, “ my mistress wont know any thing about it; Mr. George wont let them go into her room; though, for the matter o’ that, she has known of them when she cared more about them than she do now; ’twas paying off one that gave lady Emilia, devil as she is, such a footing here. Why there was an execution put in that very day that you

you would not go to lady Dareall's rout; and that was why Miss St. Orme was so very *pertikler* about being seen there, that people mayn't think the family cared.—There, Miss, there's the second bell! now please to go down, and don't look as though you knowed any thing about the matter."

Augusta found all the family usually visible at that hour assembled at the breakfast-table, besides Mr. Cooper and captain Greaves. The colonel, polite and cheerful as usual, was standing in the middle of the room, talking to a tall, raw-boned, severe-looking man, whose face seemed an indication of the approach of "all the nameless ills that flesh is heir to."

Augusta shuddered, but the courteous smile and affectionate address of her uncle reassured her. The tall man, with a stiff bow, left the room.—"Curse his impudence!" cried the captain; "I thought he meant to take his breakfast with us, a scoundrel!"

" 'Tis a terrible bore," drawled Henry St.

St. Orme: "you do not manage those things well, sir; 'pon honour, you should keep them out of one's way at any rate."

"See, sir, that you direct your own affairs better; if my house is disagreeable to you, you are of age, and have a commission in the Guards, a fine person, a handsome stud, and a *quantum sufficit* of assurance, and many men have made their way in the world with fewer advantages," replied the colonel with dignity.

Henry examined his teeth in a pocket mirror, and carelessly rejoined—"True, sir, general Bernard, for instance."

The colour mounted to his father's forehead, and his eyes flashed fire; but Eleonora prevented reply, by asking the colonel at what hour she could have the carriage?

"I keep a carriage solely for the ladies of my family," replied her father; "and you, as my eldest daughter, have a right to command it."

"If rude hands should be laid on the colonel's,

colonel's, you may command sir Edward Hargrave's elegant chariot without fear of disappointment," sneeringly observed Henry.

"Thank you for the intimation," replied Eleonora, gaily; "when the said chariot is my own, I shall cheerfully offer it to Augusta; but until then, must beg leave to decline."

At this instant the coachman came to the door; a few words passed, and the butler informed his master, that the person who lately left the room declared that neither the carriage nor horses should leave the stables.

"I thought so," cried George. "Why the fellow is a devil incarnate!"

"I will see to it, colonel," said captain Greaves, rising to leave the room; "will you name——"

"Oh, certainly, certainly, my good friend," interrupted the colonel, hastily.—"Augusta, my love, will you oblige me by

by your company in the library a few minutes?"

An expression of undefinable meaning passed over Eleonora's fine face, as she haughtily said—"Behold, George, a trial—Interest *versus* Principle. Principle conquers, and leaves the court with flying colours."

"I feel a pleasure, my dear Augusta, truly paternal," said the colonel, taking his niece's hand in his, "in being duly authorized to lay before you the most flattering prospect that ever opened on a young lady—prospects that very many daughters of our nobility, and of men possessing the largest fortunes, would feel highly honoured by seeing opened before them: but to the point, as doubtless you are anxious—allow me to felicitate you and your parents on the noble, the liberal offers of captain Greaves, who by me lays his hand and fortune at your feet, and entreats you will name an early day, when he may have the happiness of placing you

in a situation you were born to grace, and of securing his own felicity."

"Not another word, my dear sir," replied Augusta, decisively. "I waited with some curiosity to discover if the noble captain's *own felicity* made any part of his consideration; having ascertained that point, allow me, through you, to gratefully decline both hand and fortune, and to hope he will bestow it on some more sensible fair one."

Augusta rose to go—"Heavens!" exclaimed the colonel, seizing her by the arm, "you cannot mean what you say—you do not seriously intend a thing so absurd as to refuse the captain's noble offers?"

"I certainly do most unhesitatingly refuse any offer in captain Greaves's power to make me," replied Augusta, with an air of haughty determination.

"Then allow me, Miss Augusta, as the representative of your father, to say, that I will not permit you thus inconsiderately to

to throw from you the offer of an excellent establishment, rank, wealth, power, and a husband in every respect a gentleman and a man of honour. I should ill supply your father's place, by thus allowing you to ruin yourself," returned the colonel, in firm decisive tones.

" I knew not before any reason why I should explain the motives that influence me," replied Augusta with dignity; " but the fatherly interest you kindly express for me claims some gratitude. The man then, my dear uncle, you speak so highly of, is one who would be abhorrent to my parents; his principles, his manners, I may add his very person, would disgust them; and I feel perfectly free to say, that dear as I am to them, they would both prefer my wedding the grave to becoming the wife of captain Greaves."

" Ridiculous, Augusta! too romantic for the credibility of a fanatic like yourself! Your father knows the world, and would be happy to see his eldest child so

well settled, without his being troubled for what would be inconvenient for him to find—*a dower*. Your mother has, I am sure, suffered too much from straitened circumstances, not to feel delight at the prospect of her daughter escaping such an evil; any opposition from them is therefore too preposterous to think of. Your cousin Eleonora, I am happy to say, will become the envied bride of sir Edward Hargrave very shortly, and I have set my heart on seeing you Mrs. Greaves on the same day."

"Be satisfied, sir, with one sacrifice," returned Augusta; "Eleonora was born for the world she lives in; not so the more humble Augusta; if wealth, rank, fashion, or even beauty, could have tempted me to deviate from the path of duty, by giving my hand where my heart was not, Eleonora will tell you I need not have waited for an object disgusting and hateful as this captain—my fate had long ago been

been decided, and that decision was heaven compared to this."

Augusta could hold out no longer—a rush of recollection came over her, and the ready tears flowed over her crimsoned cheek. Deceived by her tears, the colonel fancied he was gaining ground, and proceeded to urge his point yet more strongly.

Augusta scarcely heard him for some minutes, when recovering herself—"Why," asked she, in an agitated voice, "should you, my dear sir, wish me to marry a man I do not love?"

"Because," replied he, starting fiercely to his feet, "I consider love as a mere *ignis fatuus* to lead youth astray—the curse that blights their opening life; and because (you may as well know what cannot be hidden from you) such a marriage is particularly desirable to *me*. You talk, Augusta, of religion—is not the first principle of religion to do good to our neighbours?"

"Yes, even to our enemies."

“ Very well, then, taking you on your own ground, it becomes a duty in you to do me a service; for surely, as your father’s eldest brother, the head of a respectable family, and an uncle who has lavished kindness on you for some time, I have a claim beyond your neighbour, not to say enemy. Know then, my dear Augusta, my affairs are for the present a little embarrassed, and some decisive step must be taken to retrieve them. Sir Edward, with noble generosity, has offered to come forward on the one hand, and captain Greaves on the other, to extricate me from every difficulty, provided my daughter and niece will respectively give them their hands. Eleonora has consented; and captain Greaves waits but your word to pay off a troublesome affair now in the house, and set me and my whole family at ease. Hence I think I have proved, that not only your interest but your duty demands what you are pleased to call a sacrifice, but which, when coolly reflected on, you will

will deem the acceptance of a higher honour than any portionless girl could have dared to hope for."

All Augusta's pride was in arms—indignation conquered the feelings of a heart not unfrequently betrayed into weakness by the keenness of its susceptibilities. Rising from her chair with dignity, her tall figure gained additional height, as she replied—"However I may be the daughter of a younger brother, unable to give his child a dower—of a mother who has suffered from straitened circumstances—a fanatical portionless girl—still, even after all the persecution of this morning, do I preserve my senses, my integrity, and my independence, and solemnly declare, that no consideration shall make me sully the high respectability of my noble father and mother's name, by introducing as the husband of their *portionless* daughter a man whom they would blush to see occupy a seat at their hospitable board, and whom their daughter most heartily despises."

"Augusta," cried the colonel, bitterly, "you are a fool, and a cruel proud fool!"

"Cruel towards whom, sir?"

"Towards yourself, towards me, and towards my family."

"I disclaim the charge, sir, and decline all further parley, only declaring that any request you can make of me, that does not implicate my honour, or infringe on my permanent peace of mind, I shall most happily, most gratefully comply with," replied she impressively; and without waiting another instant, darted from the library, and hastened towards her own room.

Scarcely had Augusta reached her dressing-room, than throwing herself on a sofa, she buried her face in its pillow, and burst into an hysterical passion of tears, in which she indulged some minutes without interruption. A hand gently laid on her shoulder, and the repetition of her name, aroused her, and looking up, she met the benevolent

lent saddened countenance of George St. Orme.

"Let brotherly affection plead my excuse for this interruption," said he: "come, cease those tears, and be yourself again. My father, I trust, could not be rude, and you will probably hear no more of the matter; but I could not be easy without assuring you, that until after you had left the breakfast-room with my father, I was ignorant of the captain's proposal, or that my father would wish to promote such an union. That Greaves admired you, I know; but upon my honour I did not think he had so much impudence! he knows, however, your decision; Eleonora did not allow him to suffer from suspense."

"And what will become of my poor uncle?" cried Augusta.

"Thank you for this solicitude?" returned George; "but for the present, I hope all is safe."

"Safe!" exclaimed Eleonora, that mo-

ment coming in, and throwing her arms round Augusta, kissed her flushed cheek again and again—“yes, safe by the ruin of the brightest spot in our house.—I knew, Augusta, you would not accept that piece of gross mortality, and told him so, not to-day only, but from the first day I espied out their vile plot. I told papa the same, and they ought to have believed me; so indeed they did; but reckoning on your tender feelings and your generosity, it was thought worth a trial. How does living in the world harden the heart and narrow the mind! my father was generous, and noble too, once: had any one stopped the valiant soldier on the burning plains of Hindoostan, or amid the woody defiles of the New World, and held up the picture of this day to him, how would he have started, exclaiming—‘Is thy servant a dog to do this thing?’ You see *I* can quote Scripture, Augusta: but man knows not himself—nay, nor woman either. I have consented to become

come a wretch, and George has, with a stroke, this morning cut off all his future prospects, and made himself a beggar—and for what? that we may jingle our caps and bells a little while longer in the ears of those who will (the best thing they can do, by the bye) forget us the moment the tinkling has ceased. But moralizing is useless, and tears I have not—they will not come at my bidding as at yours, my good cousin, though I suspect they cool the brain very much, yet they are no improvers to beauty, so *allons*: the carriage is at liberty—let us return the pretty Mrs. Beauchamp's visit; if we are not seen out, this story will get wind, and I shall have done but little after all."

" You are at least sure of some portion of happiness," said George, forcing a laugh; " you will have it in your power to do good, and to laugh at the follies of your neighbours."

" By far the most certain source to draw

from,"

from," returned Eleonora gaily as she disappeared.

As the cousins were going down stairs, Lucinda popped her beautiful face out of a side room, imploring to be taken with them.

"Ay, come along," cried Eleonora; "we want some one to sing, 'Begone dull Care;" but no signs of care was there about the dark-eyed girl; she laughed, talked, and trifled, as if in the fulness of a heart overflowing with joy—kissed her hand to the passers by on the right hand and on the left, and dispensed her nods and smiles in youthful, happy profusion.

Arrived at Mrs. Beauchamp's, she discharged all her artillery of wit upon the blushing bride—rattled in thoughtless gaiety with the young husband—played with a lap-dog—teased a squalling parquet, that strutted round its gilded prison, and gave full vent to the exuberance of her hilarity.

Lucinda, who talked nonsense very prettily,

prettily, but never spoke a word of good sense, and was evidently something of an imbecile, played a very good second to her sister, and gave Augusta more liberty to indulge in pensive thoughtfulness than she could otherwise have enjoyed.

As they rose to depart, Mrs. Beauchamp held out her hand affectionately to Augusta.—“I have scarcely spoken to you,” said she, “or heard the sound of your voice; and yet I have a favour to ask of you; may I venture?”

Augusta smilingly replied—“You will scarcely ask any thing I shall not feel pleasure in granting; my only surprise is, how, in the midst of all that gives life its charm, you can find any thing to ask.”

“I have though, in the abundance of all my happiness, an unsatisfied desire. My dear Beauchamp, tell her what I want, for positively I cannot.”

“What a little simpleton you are!” returned the gratified husband, patting her blushing cheek.—“Olivia, Miss Augusta, has

has set her heart upon your paying her a visit of some length, for weeks, months, or even years, if we dared ask so much; you will not, I am sure you will not, summon courage to refuse her: see how imploring she looks."

"I am not much in the habit of refusing that which gratifies me," returned Augusta; "but in the present case, I am scarcely my own mistress; my visit, I expect, is drawing towards a close, and——"

"And," interrupted Eleonora, "you are all being very fine, very sentimental, and very foolish; Augusta will not return while I remain——no matter what; therefore if she wishes to accept your invitation, Mrs. Beauchamp, there is no reason why she should not."

This matter being settled in Eleonora's prompt way, it was agreed that Augusta should return to Upper Brook-street the following day to dinner, and remain there at least a week.

Eleonora consulted her watch—"It is four,"

four," said she; "we have just time to drop cards at lady Balferron's on our way home."

But lady Balferron was at home—saw the carriage coming—knew it—and desired the servant to request Miss St. Orme would come in, if but for an instant; and what a contrast did she present to the happy smiling Olivia! with a pang that threatened to free her troubled spirit, she held Eleonora to her bosom for an instant, then losing her hold, with a mighty effort, strove to look and talk at ease, though the convulsive twitches of her lovely pale face evinced internal agony.

Eleonora inquired for the earl.

"He is well," said Alicia, "and will be most happy to see you. But do you not inquire for my nursery?"

Eleonora started.—"I knew not there existed such a claimant on my affection," returned she with agitation.

The nurse appeared with the infant,  
George

George Frederick : again Eleonora started and became pale.

“ Nay, do not look aghast,” smiled the countess ; “ I would have something to love—something on which to doat ; and the name is so dear, that even, if a weakness, I must choose it.”

“ I was only surprised,” said Eleonora. “ It is a sweet infant; even I could love it.”

Augusta, who doated on children, almost devoured the little wretch, to hide her emotion ; and Eleonora, after a short whisper, rising to go, nurse disappeared with her charge.

“ Let me see you often,” said the countess : “ it is better for me than medicine ; beside I must hear all.”

“ You shall,” replied Eleonora ; “ and more than you expect.”

The carriage drove off; and for the first time since she had known her, Augusta thought her cousin possessed a softened heart. Not a word was spoken by either during

during the ride home; but as the carriage door opened, Eleonora resumed her usual air of levity, exclaiming—"Here ends our Quaker's meeting; now for life and frolic."

Augusta hastened to change her dress, hoping to go into the drawing-room soon enough to ascertain who composed the dinner company; but the excitations of the day had drawn too largely on her spirits, and, unable to arrange her long hair, she sat down, and for a moment yielding to the hysterical sensation that oppressed her, burst into tears.

"Oh dear, dear, Miss," cried Martin, "there certainly is something in this abominable square that makes us all nervous. There, take these drops; they will soon bring you about. Come, you look better already. What a lovely complexion yours is, Miss! Here is my master, poor man (and a better never lived), has had another of them nasty epileptic fits this morning, and one day or other they'll carry him off; but he can't bear that any one

one should know he is subject to them, and therefore will not have proper advice. Our doctor calls it suppressed gout; but then why does he suppress the gout? Master used to have the gout when we were abroad; ah, what a pity we should ever have come home—such a home as 'tis!"

Augusta found on inquiry that her uncle had of late become subject to epilepsy; and that any strong emotion generally produced a fit; she recollects his agitated state that morning, and compassion took place of every other sentiment, as she almost blamed herself for having contributed to his vexation.

The second dinner-bell rung before Augusta had completed her attire: running hastily down, she was met at the drawing-room door by Henry de Montford.—“Ah!” cried he, seizing her hand, “then you are alive, after all the torments of this morning. You see I am *au fait* of particulars; poor George was like a madman at the thought of your being

ing drawn into his family secrets and troubles; but after all he was a little unreasonable, for the colonel (who had much on the stake) could not be sure you would refuse his friend."

"He might have been, with a very little observation, I think," replied Augusta: "however, I sincerely wish my uncle had put my desire to serve him to a less severe test—he should have found that nothing short of actual sin would have prevented me."

De Montford secured a chair next to Augusta, who, on looking round, saw the faces she was generally accustomed to meet there, with their usual appearance of gaiety; the colonel she thought rather more stately, and perhaps a little cold in his address; captain Greaves looked as though he knew nothing of the matter; and sir William Hargrave strove to look young and happy, in both of which he failed, but "*grinned a ghastly grin*" very frequently.

"I think,"

“I think,” resumed De Montford, as soon as he found an opportunity—“I think, from your last observation, that you consider it actual sin to marry a man you do not love. Am I right in my conjecture?”

“Very nearly so,” replied Augusta; “can a woman, who, in the face of God and man, swears to love and honour a man for whom she does not entertain either sentiment, be free from sin? Certainly not; since she is lying in the face of Heaven. How much deeper then must the dye be of that sinner who approaches the altar of her God, and enters into the most solemn of all engagements, the most sacred of all holy rites, with a man whom her soul loathes—a being whom she would gladly lose sight of for ever! Oh, the very thought makes me shudder! I could not, would not sanction such a ceremony by my presence, or contradict my conscience by a congratulation.”

“Say not so, Augusta; you know not how

how soon your firmness may be put to the trial," returned De Montford; " nor how soon—in fact, my dear friend, you are talking of untried circumstances."

" Not altogether so," said Augusta, smiling; " and you will see that my practice agrees with my precepts."

" But, my dear Augusta," resumed De Montford earnestly, " you are certainly severe. Let me suppose a case, and, alas! they are not rare in real life; two young people, mutually amiable and mutually dependent on friends, are thrown a great deal together in society, until, from an acquaintance with each other's good qualities, they become mutually and insensibly attached to each other; unconscious of wrong, or perhaps hoping, yet dreading, they nurse the sweet flame, until the warmest, purest love fills each bosom. The friends are then consulted, and an insuperable barrier is raised between them; a parent's malediction, an uncle's curse, poverty, contempt and derision, are placed in

in terrific array before them—what is to be done?—are they to brave all this, Augusta?”

“ Most certainly not, unless they would draw down Heaven’s curse on their undutiful heads,” replied Augusta energetically.

“ Granted: but it does not end there, particularly with a female; suspicion is now awake, and fear that love will triumph makes the parent or guardian vigilant. A husband is soon found, who does not ask all the melting tenderness of a first love, simply because *he* is incapable of feeling it; in some instances, threats and menaces are used; in others, pride, generosity, and filial affection, are attacked—all hope of an union with the object of her love is gone for ever—urged by circumstances, she becomes the wife of a man she does not love, sometimes of a man she hates, but her position in society is retained; and if she be faithful to such a man, surely, Augusta, this wife is an object

object of respect and pity, not the committer of actual sin."

" You are an excellent advocate, Henry! and my sex should be much obliged to you for the kindness with which you would strew flowers over the shady spots in their characters or conduct," replied Augusta. " To the first part of your case I have replied; no young woman should marry under the prohibition of her parents; it then becomes her duty to conquer by reason and religion her first attachment as much as possible; and should she so far succeed as to be able to contemplate the object of it as the husband of another, to meet him in society, and converse with him without emotion, *then* is she at liberty to give her hand to another, provided he is a man whom she can respect and esteem—a man she would feel proud to consider her protector, and the father of her children; in such a case, affection, pure and dignified affection, will follow a union; and such only are the

unions that can be entered into without sin."

"And you think, Augusta, you could resist every inducement to enter on a marriage which had not this basis?"

"I feel no doubt on the subject; since I believe no inducement on earth would be sufficient to make me enter on a state of virtual adultery," returned Augusta firmly.

Eleonora, who did not seem to fill her seat with her accustomed ease, now gave the signal for retiring, and Mr. Cooper offering his arm to Mrs. St. Orme, led her to the drawing-room door. De Montford pressed Augusta's hand in passing—"If all were as right principled as you are, how much misery would be spared!" sighed he.

Augusta thought of his sister with pity, but could not regret what she had said, since nothing could make her compromise with actual wrong.

Scarcely had she gained the drawing-room

room ere Miss Cooper seized her arm—“ Do,” said she, “ walk into this room with me; I must tell you how delighted papa is with you for refusing that dissolute captain, who, he says, ought not to be admitted into a house where there are young ladies. We all pity poor George; but it is so pleasant to be able to respect him, that he has gained rather than lost by this morning’s business.”

“ I do not exactly understand what he has done; is it a secret?” asked Augusta.

“ Oh dear, no,” replied her friendly informant; “ I thought you understood the whole affair: the execution that you know was here was for four thousand pounds, and the man was determined to proceed to extremities immediately; so something was to be done; and a family council was held late last night, when Eleonora consented to marry sir Edward, and he is to pay off the most noisy claimants, to the amount of ten thousand pounds; Greaves offered to pay the present seizure, if you

would become his wife; and there was no persuading the colonel that you would not jump at it: as to our affair, I am to remain here. George was gone to bed ill, of course could not be present; but Henry swore you were the luckiest girl in the world to meet with such a catch. It was to no purpose that Elly told them who and what you had rejected—they were sure your heart was too tender to refuse. However, when George heard this morning what was proposed, he vowed you never should sacrifice yourself to support the follies of his family, and immediately proposed mortgaging his presumptive title to a property he will inherit in right of his mother, as the next male heir to her brother. Well, this was eagerly seized on and accepted; so the affair has ended for the present; but George has a friend; and if he goes on well, this mortgage will not be permitted to ruin him, I hope."

"He has a friend," thought Augusta, "in your warm heart; and sincerely do I hope

hope he will become sensible to its worth, and answer your modest, innocent affections with responding warmth."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ah, friend, to dazzle let the vain design—  
To raise the thought, to touch the heart, be thine;  
That charm shall grow, while what fatigues the ring,  
Flaunts, and goes down an unregarded thing.     POPE.

.....  
“Qu'il n'y a qu'un temps pour vivre.”

THE week with Mrs. Beauchamp passed swiftly away, differing widely from any other week Augusta had spent in London: here all was indulgence, fondness, luxury, and ease. Olivia was kind, tender-hearted, and affectionate, in her general behaviour. She was happy; but what was that without having some one to talk of it to? hence arose her fondness for Augusta, who, unacquainted with indulgence or luxury, looked with wonder and astonishment on the silly, pampered little being

being before her, whose only torment was the contrivance of fresh luxuries, or new indulgences. She was pretty and good-tempered, but had no mind, not an idea of her own, and uttered the silliest things imaginable, in a sweet voice, with a cherub mouth, only to be admired and obeyed. Her father and mother, far from dreaming she was not sensible, deemed her an oracle, and existed only for the comfort of their darling.

The honourable Charles Beauchamp, by marrying Olivia, secured to himself a large property, and a pretty, fashionable, virtuous wife; and in so doing, deemed himself fortunate beyond the common run, and soon began to confound a well-informed or sensible woman with blue stockings, and to declaim accordingly: a female should be delicate, helpless, interesting, tender, confiding; he hated a learned woman, and sickened at an eternally-rosy cheek, a laughing eye, and the *volant* step

of health and hilarity ; there was nothing elegant, nothing of *the lady* in it.

“ It wants, perhaps, the patent of nobility,” said Augusta.

“ Not exactly that ; but certainly there is nothing interesting, nothing partaking of refinement or superior life, in robust health, animal spirits, strong nerves, Greek, Latin, and argument,” returned Beauchamp ; and Augusta mentally acknowledged there was wisdom in thus teaching his mind to conform to circumstances ; for she felt convinced, that had a wife of an opposite character fallen to his lot, Charles Beauchamp, himself amiable and highly informed, would have held a different faith.

There was something about Olivia that gained her an interest in the affections, yet Augusta could not flatter herself with having secured a friend from the connexion—that all impressions on Olivia’s heart would be written on sand, and unless constantly renewed, effaced by the rapid step of time, or washed away by the first

first rush of joy or sorrow. Towards the doting father, general Bernard, Augusta felt something of her uncle's prejudice: she would have been at a loss to say why, yet he was a man she could neither love nor esteem, one whose presence never imparted pleasure, and whose departure was a sensible relief. Mrs. Bernard, however, was a being of another creation; it was impossible not to love and respect the kind-hearted, charitable matron, whose whole life was spent in doing good—unpresuming, but truly respectable; she was the comforter, benefactress, and friend, of all within her sphere. Of her father she was accustomed to speak, not of "papa," and "papa's legacy," but with such expressions of veneration and esteem, as would almost make her hearers wish that they themselves had such a father. She certainly helped to spoil her daughter by overweening indulgence, but at the same time gave her, both by precept and ex-

ample, the most valuable advice in a mother's power to give.

Of the countess Balferren and her amiable brother Augusta saw a great deal during her stay in Upper Brook-street. She pitied both the earl and countess: he was a plain, well-meaning, elderly man; but perfectly aware that he did not possess his young wife's affections, he demanded but little from her, lavishing all his fondness on his infant son, in whose nursery he was much oftener to be found than in his wife's boudoir, thus leaving her to the indulgence of a morbid, sickly imagination, brooding over her lost happiness, and conversing with the ghosts of other days, sinking into a premature grave, without an effort to save herself, or redeem her peace. De Montford wept over her, and for her, as of a sacrifice offered on the altar of ambition. But he and Augusta could not think alike on the subject; Augusta prescribed exertion, religion, active

tive charity, and resignation to that which her own act had rendered unalterable.

With all this Alicia was totally unacquainted, and her brother knew but little of it; she was gentle, tender, confiding, and yielding, had given her whole heart to a being that her affection had clothed in every manly grace, and every Christian virtue—had been torn from him by violence, and given to the arms of a man whom she could have esteemed as a father, but who was totally uncalculated to wean her affections from him she still doated on. Under all this she sunk; neither religion, such as the Gospel teaches, nor fortitude, such as a well-regulated, sound mind, possesses, were at hand to support her; her heart seemed broken, and her peace gone.—“What then have I to live for but my boy?” said she; “and, De Montford, you will watch over him when I am gone.”

“I cannot be a mother to him, my poor Alicia, and a father he will not want; you

must live for him yourself, my dear. Recollect what you were told this morning; make but the effort, and all is done."

"Ah, Henry, she knows nothing about it," returned Alicia, with a languid smile; "the firm heart cannot feel like the broken one. But I will tell you what I will do—I will bequeath my child to Clara Cooper; one day or other she will be what I ought to have been, and will not, out of the fulness of her felicity, grudge a little kindness being shewn to poor Alicia's child."

De Montford could not bear it; he caught up his hat, and rushed from the room to hide his womanly emotion—"And Eleonora will be the next victim!" cried he, when relating this conversation to Augusta; "her pride, her fortitude, and her high unbending spirit, will cast a brighter aspect over the ruin, and hide its decay from the unthinking world, whose pity would distract her; but the ruin is as certain, and the misery will be tenfold Alicia's;

Alicia's; for the baronet, acquainted with the errors of human nature, and sceptical on the score of virtue, is jealous as an Indian squaw, or a Turkish bashaw, and will never place confidence in the fidelity of a girl so independent and gay, one moment longer than he watches her."

"Another reason why she ought never to marry him," replied Augusta.

"I see, my dear Miss St. Orme, that you unhesitatingly condemn your cousin for consenting to this marriage; may I be permitted to ask what step you would have advised, or how you would yourself have acted under such circumstances?" said De Montford, with unusual earnestness.

"Recollect," replied Augusta, "that when once I offered an opinion, you told me I was talking of untried circumstances, and could not therefore be a proper judge.

—Nay, do not apologize," continued she, seeing him about to speak, "I am fully aware of the difference existing between

our

our situations, and can therefore only suppose how I should act ; but it does appear to me, that no situation is so degrading, so mean, or so morally wrong, as that of a young woman marrying a base, disgusting old man, sensibly alive to his faults, and loathing his person, in order to preserve to herself and family those luxuries they would be better without, and that position in society they are despised for holding. Who, among the sensible or rational part of society, will esteem Eleonora the more for being lady Hargrave, than if she were exerting her talents for the support of her family ? and how numerous will be the sneers and insults thrown out by the mean and envious, those who despise, and those who condemn, her conduct. You ask what I would have done to avoid such disgrace—I would have implored my father, on my bended knees, to have disposed of whatever he had here, and, with his family, once more to have crossed the Atlantic,

and

and there, where names and titles are of less consequence, I would cheerfully, honourably, labour for my daily support, and standing erect, say—‘I have neither bartered liberty nor conscience, and can eat my morsel in peace, and regard myself without a blush.’ Oh yes, I would work for my parents, save for them, comfort them, cheer them, nurse, and pray for them; but never, never sin for them—never sell myself, to support idle show for an uncertain time. There is no sin in honest poverty, no shame in industry; but virtual adultery, and a sacrifice of honour, principle, and independence, to a scorning, garish world—oh, it teems with ignominy, sorrow, and disgrace! You will, perhaps, condemn all this as romantic nonsense, savouring more of retired life than experience of the world—and such I acknowledge it to be; in the bosom of retirement I have been taught to value nothing so highly as integrity, to consider nothing as desirable that did not tend to the

the improvement of moral happiness and religious hope; thus, I would esteem my uncle as more honourable, guiding the plough over his own little patrimonial estate, or once again a soldier of fortune, than as now, living in idle magnificence, and selling his children and their property to support showy poverty; and Eleonora —ay, a thousand and a thousand times more respectable, more praiseworthy, should I esteem her, guiding her father's humble home with economical industry, or turning those talents she possesses to the purposes of education, to aid their slender finances, than while shining in a drawing-room, glittering and astonishing, equally by her diamonds and her wit, in a ball-room, or when filling the columns of a newspaper with the beauty, elegance, and splendour of lady Hargrave's court paraphernalia."

The subject was an interesting one, and Augusta might have continued all night without interruption from De Montford, who

who sat with his eyes fixed on her, as though, for the first time in his life, he heard simple truth, or saw plain sense robbed of the tinsel in which he had hitherto seen her decked. A general movement in the room, however, checked Augusta, and aroused De Montford.—“ You are right,” cried he, “ quite right ! we are slaves to appearance—miserable slaves ; but you have shewn me the affair in another light—a purer, clearer one ; and the veil once removed, will not easily be replaced—as long as I live I shall thank you.”

“ Having made that gallant declaration, perhaps Miss St. Orme will permit you to lead her to the carriage, for poor Olivia is dying of fatigue,” said Mr. Beauchamp, who overheard De Montford’s last sentence, when coming in search of his guest.

“ Do, pray,” replied Augusta, as she gave her hand to De Montford, “ fetch Olivia, and entreat she will put off dying for the present, for I long to sleep to-night ;

night ; beside, marriage is just now more in favour than dying."

On the stairs Augusta started at hearing her own name pronounced in the voice of surprise, and looking up, met the astonished gaze of her old friend Glossit. After such a long separation, and at a moment so unexpected, he came upon the frightened recollection of Augusta like a favoured member of her own family ; his appearance brought with it so many fond associations, "the dear regards of kindred and of home," so many tender remembrances, and such a rush of affecting feelings, that his reception was more that of a beloved brother than of a discarded lover. After a few moments given to fond inquiries, Augusta, on hearing he had letters for her in his unpacked portmanteau, discovered for the first time that he was that moment off a journey, and giving him her address, requested to see him in the morning, and followed the somewhat impatient Olivia to the carriage.

During

During the ride home, Beauchamp and his wife rallied Augusta on the tenderness with which she met Mr. Glossit, who they both united in denominating “a favoured lover.” Augusta gaily defended herself, and with her native candour spoke of him as an old friend of her family and connexions, almost all of whom were intimately known to him; but disclaimed the lover, until finding all she could say useless, and not relishing *bardinage* on that one subject, she referred them to Eleonora for all she knew respecting Mr. Glossit, who, it now appeared, was the brother of Mrs. Woolford, of whose *conversazione* they had that evening formed a part.—“I fancy,” continued Mr. Beauchamp, when they arrived at home, “you were too busily engaged with De Montford, Miss Augusta, to hear any one else this evening, or it is probable you might have gained some new ideas; for Mrs. Woolford is a perfect original, of a very deep blue; nay, do not look incredulous—I  
really

really mean blue—not so bright, but deeper blue than your questioning eye. Woolford is a dashing four-in-hand jockey, and cares no more about his wife's learning and philosophy than about the emperor of Morocco: they have two poor unfortunate children, both girls, who the father swears shall be the best jockeys in England, and the mother protests shall be the best classic scholars, and first philosophers of the age: so that, poor dears, if they escape Scylla, they are to wreck on Charybdis. Mind, Olivia, my girls shall neither be jockeys or Grecians, though, upon my soul, I believe the Grecian is the worst of the two. If Woolford's wife were mine, I would fly from her far as pole from pole."

" Do yourself more justice," replied Augusta; " if Mrs. Woolford were your wife, you would, by a seeming compliance with her weakness, conquer it; depend upon it, there is no foible to which a woman is so wedded, that gentle government and persevering kindness will not cure

cure it; and if Mrs. Woolford possesses but half the natural sweetness of disposition her brother does, the task would not be a difficult one."

"Perhaps not; but notwithstanding your compliment, fair Augusta, I am heartily glad to be spared the task of conversion. Hang it, a woman should be religious, if but from policy! there is nothing so disgusting as soft woman's ruby lip uttering anti-christian, infidel nonsense."

"Poor woman! I wish she had fallen to the share of a more rational man, for her children's sake," said Augusta, as wishing her friend good night, she added, "The dove, Olivia, has nestled with you, and will never be frightened away by violence or infidelity; and I flatter myself will not be allowed to escape by negligence; but recollect, it will always require watching."

Olivia laughingly called her—"Pretty preacher," and wished her safely noosed in the matrimonial knot.

"The

“ The business and aim of female life,” cried Augusta, as she reviewed the incidents and conversation of the day in the solitude of her own chamber, “ is to obtain a matrimonial connexion of good promise, and then, good Heavens! how little happiness do they enjoy! pleasure, show, and accomplishments, have taken the place of solid comfort and domestic happiness. If what I have seen be a fair specimen of the world, why then, Edwin Heathfield, you and I shall be happier out of it than any of the dashing, fluttering votaries I have seen here.” A sigh followed this apostrophe; for Augusta felt a sensation of disappointment—a vacancy in her warm heart, that London or Edwin Heathfield had failed to fill; a vision floated in her imagination, that displayed a rare union of pleasure and happiness—an unclouded sky, intellectual pursuits, and the society of a superior manly being, with whom her every thought and will was blended—one for

for whom she could feel the most refined friendship and esteem ; united to

“ The love that cheers life’s latest stage,  
Proof against sickness and old age,  
Preserved by virtue from declension,  
Becomes not weary of attention ;  
But lives when that exterior grace,  
That first inspires the flame, decays.”

This she could not flatter herself with feeling for Edwin ; the defects of his character and person were too obvious.— “ Well,” thought she, smiling at the idea, “ I have never yet been allowed to find a fault in those with whom I live ; nor consider myself in any respect a superior. I shall do both with Edwin ; and to be first is no mean source of enjoyment.”

The following morning brought Mr. Glossit at an early hour into Brook-street. Olivia would have left the room, and could scarcely be brought to think Augusta really would not receive him, if left alone. She however consented to remain, and soon grew quite delighted with her friend’s

friend's visitor. Glossit indeed was in one of his happiest moods, and neither offended against the fealty due to church, king, or chastity ; and Augusta began sincerely to hope, that a few months had shewed him the indelicacy and impropriety of his former sentiments. But it was the fault of Augusta's character to draw hasty conclusions, and to be imposed on by the appearance of virtue or suffering. Thus she frequently found herself under the mortifying necessity of contradicting this week the opinions of the last, or of persisting in wilful error ; and of discarding the *protégées* for absolute baseness, whom she had adopted under an impression of virtuous suffering, or unmerited misfortune.

Glossit was full of information, interesting to Augusta, and amusing to Olivia ; and the morning was flying on rapid wings, when Mr. Beauchamp appeared, bringing with him Eleonora and Amelia St. Orme.—“ Why you unfeeling wretch ! ” cried Eleonora, turning to Beauchamp, “ how

“ how could you think of frightening me so? I declare you deserve hanging ! My dear Glossit, I as much expected to meet the grand Cham of Tartary as your sweet self here : when or how did you arrive ?”

“ I came *here*, my charming friend, this morning ; for the *how*—do not blush—but positively, I walked from St. James’s-square,” replied he.

“ Nay, now,” exclaimed Eleonora, “ do not be a fool, Glossit ! When did you arrive in London, and how did you find out Augusta ? I am dying to know every thing about you.”

“ Too kind by half !” cried Glossit, smiling : “ ingrate that I am, to request an introduction to this young lady, before satisfying your gracious sweet demands.”

“ Mr. Glossit dreads your fascinations, Miss St. Orme, and would fain take refuge in your sister’s soft smiles, or perhaps he already knows your destination, and wisely stands clear of sir William’s double-barrel pistols,” said Beauchamp, with the tone

and air of a perfect coxcomb; but Eleonora was not to be deceived or alarmed: she knew that both Beauchamp and Olivia's family hated her; and the dastardly cowardice of sir William was as well known, and as generally allowed, as any other of his numerous recommendations. Turning therefore, with sparkling eyes and heightened complexion, to Mr. Beauchamp, she let fly from her full quiver such a shower of arrows, pointed with keen wit, and dipped in the bitter waters of contemptuous satire, as quickly drove him from the field, utterly discomfited, and left her at liberty to draw forth the darkest shades in her friend Glossit's character into broad daylight, which from the spirit of pure revenge, she did most unmercifully.

Augusta sat on thorns: she loved her cousin, but dreaded seeing her mount the unbroken horse of satirical wit: it was then that Eleonora, forgetting she was woman, ceased to be amiable—and brilliant, dangerous,

dangerous, and energetic, she might have exclaimed—"I have set my life upon a cast, and will stand the hazard of the die;" for she never yielded until every opponent shrunk and quailed before her, either in disgust or exhaustion.

From this "fire-works of eyes and words," Glossit at last made his escape, having sunk dreadfully in the opinion of Olivia and her husband, who were highly aristocratical in their notions of church and state, as well as lovers of virtue, and what they thought good Christians.

"Now," said Eleonora, as the door closed on him, "I may prepare myself for a lecture, for I see, Augusta, you think I have been too severe on that poor devil; but I have no time to hear it, and merely called to say, that having eked your promised week to a fortnight, all colonel St. Orme's family are most anxious that you should this day resume your place among them, particularly the eldest daughter, who, on special business of her own, wishes

to consult you : George will therefore do himself the pleasure of calling for you at four o'clock. Now, if you please, a smiling acquiescence, without a syllable of lecture."

" You are incorrigible, Eleonora, therefore need fear no lecture from me ; I never wilfully waste my time. With respect to my return to Hanover-square, without having trespassed on my kind friends here, or grown weary of them, I shall most happily accompany your brother, and meet you at dinner."

" A hint, my stately, virtuous cousin, that I am now at liberty to withdraw : let me give you a hint in return ; when you wish to please, look, as you *can do*, smiling and animated : those grave, stately airs savour too strongly of a sect in the country—they won't do : you will never succeed by them."

" Succeed !" repeated Augusta, haughtily.

" Ay, *succeed*, my dear ! you have a part to play as well as your less censorious neighbours,"

neighbours," returned Eleonora, as she gaily shook hands with them and disappeared.

Augusta's cheeks were crimson, and her eyes filled with tears. Eleonora had with a master's hand touched the chord she knew would vibrate to agony in the proudly sensitive bosom of her cousin, whose native candour rejected with horror the idea of playing a part, or striving to succeed, with any one, at the same time that she was painfully aware the peculiar circumstances of her own home were such, that even to ordinary conceptions, penetration far less acute than that of Eleonora, its corroding points were visible, and the probable advantages of an early marriage obvious. Hence not a word or look at all approaching to complaint ever escaped the high-souled, independent girl; and had the most perfect earthly paradise been supposed, she would have named her father's house; and there were times when Eleonora would have seconded her; but

Eleonora knew her power, and this morning used it unsparingly.

“Remember, Olivia,” cried Beauchamp, laughing, as he returned from handing his visitors to their carriage—“remember, my girls shall neither be jockeys, Grecians, nor wits, though, by my soul, I hate the wit most heartily of the three.”

“I have only yet heard,” replied Olivia, playfully, “what these dear little souls are *not* to be—do pray, dear Charles, say what they *are* to be; you know I hate negatives.”

“Why then, my sweet Olivia, they are to be as like to yourself and our kind Augusta as possible,” returned the fond husband.

“Thank you,” said Augusta, striving to recover her cheerfulness, “that is, until I offend; then it will be—‘But positively I hate Augusta the most heartily of all!’”

Beauchamp replied *en badinage*, and Augusta retired to read the letters Mr.

Glossit

Glossit had brought her from dear absent friends. That of her mother claimed the first attention: Mrs. St. Orme wrote with her usual affection and solicitude, but hinted that her visit was a long one—said Edwin complained sadly of its duration, and many others longed to see her—acknowledged her own cough was distressing, and that the spring tried her shattered system sadly; the children too—“in fact,” she concluded, “my child, we all miss you, regret you, and bless you every hour.”

“And why do I linger here?” cried Augusta, as with tearful eyes she read the traces of her affectionate mother’s pen; “what are the empty pleasures of this place doing, thus to withhold me from my duty?”

St. Orme’s sheet was now opened, and his daughter’s tears flowed in abundance.—“Will the gay revels,” wrote he, “of her uncle’s house teach my Augusta to look with distaste on the humble home of her parents, and the useful domestic duties

of her youth?—will the play, the opera, the ball, and the rout, supersede the church, the Bible, the family circle, or cheerful tea-party, that formerly made the business and pleasure of my child's life? if so, what endless cause of regret and sorrow shall we find! A hundred times in the week your dear afflicted mother is applied to: she looks round for Augusta, but, alas! Augusta is far away, moving in a sphere beyond her humble fortune, and gaily laughing or dancing, forgets her mother's cares and pains. I know, my child, that our house can boast but few allurements to the young and gay, but still it is *your home*; and there are your duties—your brothers, your sister, your mother, and your father, all need you."

"And they shall all have me," cried Augusta, folding up the paper: "I will remain here no longer. Ah, no! how little, my father, do you know your child!"

'There is a spot of earth supremely blest;  
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest.'

That

That spot thy home, Augusta—thy mother's home!

‘In the clear heaven of her delightful eye,  
I find my duties, pleasures, happiness, and home:’

and you, my father, generally so clear-sighted—sure you should have known that Augusta's dearest, safest place, is in your arms.”

When George St. Orme called for his cousin, he was much surprised to hear her say her continuance in London would be too short to admit of her profiting by Olivia's oft-repeated entreaty, that she would renew her visit, if but for a few days.

On her road home she mentioned her letters, and announced her intention of leaving them in two days.

“ You will surely remain until after Eleonora's wedding, or she will scarcely find courage to go through the ceremony?” urged George.

“ Eleonora,” replied Augusta, “ is not a girl to shrink from her purpose, and depend

pend on it, my presence would not bless such a union."

George urged all the common-place arguments in favour of his sister, and would if possible have mounted her into a heroine; but Augusta's clear sense of right and wrong was not to be dazzled, and they arrived at home without her yielding one iota to his oratory.

Colonel St. Orme experienced much polite regret on hearing his niece was so soon to leave them; but Augusta could easily perceive a hidden sarcasm under every sentence, expressive of contempt for her parents and herself, that would alone have driven her from his house. She therefore felt gratified in having announced her intention before meeting his august presence.

" May I ask in what manner you travel, Miss Augusta?" said the colonel, coldly.

" In the mail, sir."

" The mail, and alone! excuse my surprise,

prise, but for a young lady it is certainly a singular mode of travelling."

" And for a young lady who professes so much propriety of conduct, certainly a most extraordinary one," interrupted lady Emilia, with a sneer.

" I see nothing either singular or extraordinary in going down by the mail; it is the safest and most respectable mode for a single traveller, whether male or female, and perfectly consistent with propriety," replied Augusta, with spirit.

" Oh, my dear," returned lady Emilia, with an equivocal look and tone, " nobody will doubt the propriety or delicacy of *your* conduct, though I would not think of venturing on such a step."

" Perhaps not, madam, and you are right not to increase suspicions; but no one *will dare* asperse me—not even lady Emilia de Torville and her *followers*," replied Augusta, with a look and tone of proud disdain, as, lighting her taper, she bowed to the company and retired.

Augusta

Augusta had just sealed a short letter to her father, announcing her immediate return, and was waiting a summons to breakfast, when Eleonora, with evident marks of agitation on her fine countenance, came into the room.—“ Augusta,” said she, impressively, “ I have never yet asked a favour of mortal being—let not my first act of humility be in vain. Perhaps it may be followed by much humiliation, but I doubt me if the external marks will ever be more visible than now, when I entreat, as a favour, that you will remain with me until this detestable ceremony is over, that you will by your firmness, aid in covering my near approach to madness. Nay, do not weep, or I shall go distracted at once; say you will remain, and by the prayers an honest unpolluted heart dares offer, draw down a blessing on an otherwise accursed union.”

“ You have my prayers, dear Eleonora; worthless though they may be, they are all I have to offer,” replied Augusta, affectionately;

tionately ; “ my presence is required in another place—a sick mother, and a family to whom I have ever been useful, demand my immediate services. There, my dear cousin, lie my duties, my pleasures—here must therefore be sacrificed.”

Eleonora shook her head with a sickly incredulous smile.—“ That is not like yourself, Augusta ; but to the point—I will write your mother this day ; she is too kind to deny you or me any thing on such an occasion—an occasion that she, dear soul, will deck in the fairy colours of glowing youthful hope ; oh, I will manage it—you must remain, so say no more.”

“ Do not deceive yourself, my dear Eleonora ; you have my warmest wishes for your happiness, but indeed, indeed, I cannot be present at the ceremony. Had I not been going home, I should decidedly have spent that week with the Prestons, for my very soul forbids the union ; your motives are contrary to my religious principles,

ciples, and the act one I cannot, dare not sanction."

Eleonora started to her feet, her eyes flashed fire, a bitter sarcastic reply hovered on her lips, but restraining herself, she bowed with mock submission, and with an expressive smile of bitter derision left the room.

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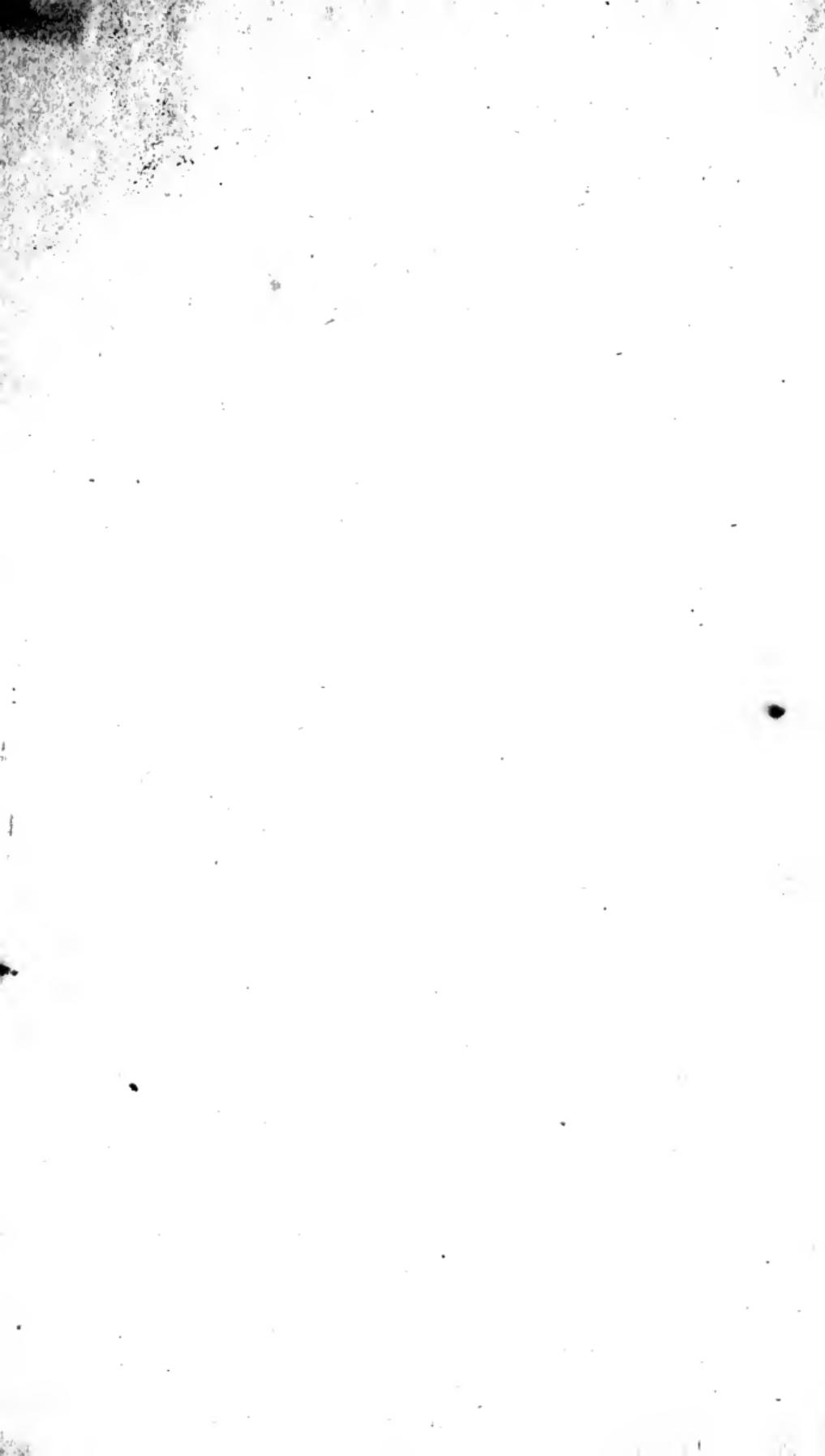
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